

Hatshepsut and Nefertiti: A study of two Egyptian queens

by

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this study project/thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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To my husband, Sakkie, who was responsible for the typing of this thesis and never failed to motivate me.

Abstract

This study attempts to answer the question how and why Hatshepsut and Nefertiti attained pharaonic prominence in a mainly patriarchal society. It follows a cultural-anthropological approach through an assessment of the interrelatedness of aspects such as religion, state organization, social life etc.

It aims at studying the history and culture of the mid - Eighteenth Dynasty from different angles: from archaeological artefacts, iconography, etc. The aforesaid has enabled me to find startling similarities in the manner how the two queens attained pharaonic prominence which again are juxtaposed by reasons proffered as to **why** they achieved these elevated positions. In finding answers to the questions raised, I attempted to refrain from making sweeping general conclusions from limited evidence, especially in Nefertiti's case.

Both Hatshepsut and Nefertiti attained pharaonic prominence with the support of important male members in the government. Both queens are also characterized by a strength in character. After the death of her father and husband in a short space of time, Hatshepsut ascended the throne as a form of "defence mechanism" to ensure dynastic succession and property continuity in the light of an apparent unavailability of eligible royal males in the consanguineal clan. Nefertiti displayed a similar strength in character when she moved from Thebes to the unknown to found a new capital city with Akhenaten. A manipulation of the economic system by both queens should not be negated. Hatshepsut as fountainhead of the state controlled the Treasury, placated the officialdom and secured a smooth transference of kingship to her after seven years in her co - regency with Thutmose III. Money paid to officials from the treasury of the Disk, coupled to Nefertiti's queenly influence on Akhenaten, ensured the unusual prominence of Nefertiti at Thebes and Akhetaten.

No real evidence has surfaced to prove why Akhenaten acknowledged Nefertiti as co - regent, other than that Nefertiti acted as Queen Regnant and enjoyed

unsurpassed religious prominence. The aforesaid is aptly emphasize by the following: the 1986 find of the Nefertiti scarab at Ulu Burun that is inscribed with the longer form of Nefertiti's name. The Petrie find of a broken stone stelae inscribed with the two names of Akhenaten, namely the epithet "Beloved" and the longer form of Nefertiti's name "Nefernefruatón" furthermore exemplified a perception of Nefertiti's regal and religious importance. The fact that the name "Nefernefruatón" is preceded in kingly fashion by the name Ankhkeprure, aptly emphasize the aforesaid. As more archaeological data and written evidence accumulate, a more complete picture may arise according to which Nefertiti could be perceived as sole ruler and whether she could be perceived as the impetus to Akhenaten's religious revolution.

Opsommings

Hierdie studie poog om d.m.v. 'n kultuur-antropologiese benadering wat aspekte soos godsdien, die politieke organisasie, die sosiale organisasie ens., met mekaar in verband bring en te bepaal hoe en waarom Hatshepsut en Nefertete soveel prominensie as farao's in 'n hoofsaaklik patriargale gemeenskap geniet het.

Die strewe is om die geskiedenis en kultuur van die middel - Agtiende Dinastie vanuit verskillende hoeke te bestudeer: met behulp van argeologiese artefate, ikonografie, ens. Hiervolgens het ek ooreenkomste ontdek in die manier hoe die koninginne faraostatus bereik het wat kontrasteer met redes wat aangevoer word **waarom** hulle die hoë status beklee het. In my soeke na antwoorde, het ek vanweë die beperkte beskikbaarheid van inligting t.o.v. Nefertete, gepoog om growwe veralgemenings in my bevindings te vermy.

Wat duidelik blyk is dat beide Hatshepsut en Nefertete die steun van amptenare in die staatsdiens geniet het. Beide koninginne toon egter ook sterk karaktereienskappe. Na die dood van Thutmoses I en Thutmoses II het Hatshepsut farao geword in die afwesigheid van hubare koninklike mans in die onmiddellike familieverband wat in staatsake sterk leiding kon neem, om sodoende die dinastieke opvolging en eiendom-voortsetting te beskerm en te verseker. Nefertete het Thebe verlaat om met Akhenaten 'n nuwe hoofstad in die onbekende te vestig. Beide koninginne het op 'n direkte of indirekte wyse die ekonomiese stelsel gemanipuleer. Hatshepsut as staatshoof, het die skatkis beheer en kon amptenare finansieel versorg en sodoende sonder probleem die oorgang van koningskap verwesenlik. Gelde betaalbaar aan amptenare uit die skatkis van die SonSkyf, gekoppel aan Nefertete se invloed op Akhenaten, het Nefertete se ongewone belangrikheid by Thebe en Akhetaten verseker.

Geen bronne kan lig werp op die rede waarom Nefertete as mede - regeerder

van Akhenaten opgetree het nie. Die 1986 vonds van 'n Nefertete skarabee by Ulu Burun en die gebreekte klipstela - vonds van Petrie toon duidelik Nefertete se politieke en religieuse prominensie. In beide vondse kom die langer vorm van Nefertete se naam naamlik "Nefernefruaton" voor, maar in laasgenoemde geval kom die woord "Geliefde" tesame met die naam Ahkhkeprure en die twee name van Akhenaten voor. Slegs wanneer meer argeologiese materiaal en skriftelike informasie aan die lig kom, sal vasgestel kan word of Nefertete 'n alleenheerser was en of die godsdienstige revolusie aan Nefertete toegeskryf kan word.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Approach

1.1. Feminist Studies and the study of women in the ancient Near East

Due to challenges of male dominance that characterize the twentieth century, a renewed assessment of women past and present has been initiated. From a feministic perspective, the Bible, for instance, contains biases since it was mainly written from a male perspective. Meyers, in Lesko (1989: 266-267) suggests that representation in the Bible of situations impinging on women's lives might be seen differently from a female perspective. The important issue of basic human rights that is encompassed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, formulated by the International Labour Organization in 1940 and seriously campaigned for by Martin Luther King, has taken on new dimensions in diverse feminist studies in the twentieth century (Wingrove: s.a. 5). In concurrence with making women's role and status in societies past and present the focal points of attention, the mandatory purpose of feminists is to pursue a common goal that will enable the empowerment of women. The goal is to pro-actively address the disadvantages experienced by marginalized groups and to create structures that will set it right in a sustainable manner. The aforesaid encompass a certain universalism, for example, in the unique South African paradigm Thea Wingrove has become a pioneer in the field of the equalizing of opportunities for the traditionally marginalized groups — such as women (Wingrove : s.a. vi, vii, xii, 5, 7).

The aforesaid is juxtaposed to the social position of women in ancient Egypt which was a patriarchal society that allowed Egyptian women to hold important positions in many spheres of society. Women in ancient Egypt were not restricted to the domicile as is the case with women in some nations of the world today (Lesko 1987 : i). Remarkable women such as Margaret Thatcher, retired Prime Minister of Britain and the late Indira Ghandi who held the same position

in India, serve as role models to women of today to attain positions that were primarily regarded as male dominated areas.

Scholars with a particular interest in the role of women in the ancient Near Eastern cultures organized several international conferences with regard to this issue. The outcome of these conferences was that a conglomeration of interesting publications came to light (Vermaak 1995 : 105). According to Lesko (1989 : xiv), the nineteenth century socialist, Engels, propagates ... "sweeping observations and conclusions ..." whose validity is highly questionable. Engels maintains that women in Near Eastern cultures were reduced to "servitude" in a patriarchal society, due to a linkage apparent in property ownership, monogamous marriage and prostitution. Lesko (1989 : xv) tends to differ. She suggests that recent studies, which were carried out by classical scholars, convey different degrees of male dominance. Lesko suggests, that based on the aforesaid, women in an egalitarian society prominently partake in public life. A degree of feminism is indeed evident in the New Kingdom period. Significantly during the reign of the female pharaoh, Hatshepsut, and Nefertiti of the Eighteenth Dynasty — a dynasty aptly termed as "formidably feminine. These two queens in their own right attained formidable positions in a patriarchal society (Lesko 1989: 101).

Lesko (1989 : xiii) in particular, perceives the study of the roles and status of women in the earliest societies, as a poorly neglected area of research in former years. This issue fortunately has been reversed, due to concurrent studies in Egyptology, social history and the escalation of women's and gender studies in general. What particularly emerged at an interdisciplinary conference held at Brown University in Providence Rhode Island in November 1987, was the goal to encourage further research on the lives of ancient women (Lesko 1989: xvii). True to the endeavours pursued at the Brown University - conference, a women sub - group in cuneiform studies was found at the Rencontre Assyriologique

Internationale (RAI) that was held at Leiden in July 1993. Furthermore, in July 1994 at the Berlin RAI, the Women's Association of Ancient Near Eastern Studies (WANES) was found (Vermaak 1995 : 105). There is now also a discussion group on the Internet: Diotima — Women and gender in the ancient world.

According to Lesko (1989 : xv) it is only in recent years that scholars have been pursuing information on the lives of women in archives. However, a new interest in ancient Near Eastern Studies was kindled with the emergence of a new approach in the interpretation of data, known as an archival in conjunction with a prosopography approach. The minute detail of groups of texts or archaeological material found together in situ, as well as the linkage of certain extended royal and non - royal families in the study of prosopography, enables one to attribute cohesion to the activities of a single person and to reconstruct the past (Vermaak 1995 : 105, 106). Thus, by employing these devices, one can in correlation with a cultural anthropological approach, make an attempt in reconstructing the past of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti.

1.2. Research problem

The New Kingdom in ancient Egypt is characterized by a period of immense wealth and security. The attainment of such wealth was firstly due to the expulsion of the Hyksos by Kamose, — according to a stela found in the early 1950's. Secondly, it was due Ahmose's exploits that caused the downfall of the Hyksos 17th Dynasty (Redford 1993 : 126 - 129). Furthermore, the military campaigns to Syria, the establishment of the capital at Thebes and an affirmation of the patron god, Amen - Re of Karnak caused Egypt not only to benefit politically from the fusion of diplomatic marriages and international peace treaties, but also to gain economically from foreign imports. The later Eighteenth Dynasty royal female personalities, especially the female pharaoh,

Hatshepsut, and queen Nefertiti enjoyed unsurpassed importance in both religious and public life (Lesko 1989 : 101).

Hatshepsut, who at first was queen consort of Thutmose II,¹ virtually became sole ruler after his death, since Thutmose III was a minor (Lesko 1987 : 4). Watterson (1991 : 138 - 221) and Tyldesley (1994 : 11) concede that Hatshepsut's ascension to the throne in 1490 BC was preceded by a period of wealth and at a time of internal tranquillity and that a political vacuum created exceptionally favourable circumstances for Hatshepsut's accession, since no male prince was of age to ascend the throne. On the other hand, Nefertiti is perceived by Samson (1985 : 87) as one who enjoyed a co - regency with Akhenaten. She derives this factor from ostraca found by Petrie, bearing the names of "Beloved" and "Nefernefruatón", both names assigned to Nefertiti. Nefertiti's elevated regal and religious position is determinatively manifested in the finding of a gold scarab (KW 772) in 1986 at Ulu Burun, inscribed with the name of "Nefernefruatón Nefertiti" i.e., **nfr - nfrw - 'itn nfrt - 'i'it'i** with a distinct reversal in the **'itn** that results in the seated queen facing the name of the god (Weinstein 1989: 17 - 19). Weinstein (1989: 25) suggests that the finding of this artifact points to Egyptian - Aegean relations in the period after Akhenaten's death and the beginning years of the Ramesside period.

I purposely chose to determine how and why in a male dominated society as ancient as Egypt, principally consort queens attained pharaonic prominence and power, though they both scorned tradition and defied the Egyptian rule of conformity (Robins 1993 : 19). No scholar is in agreement on the question why the queens ruled, since Hatshepsut was in fact in co - regency with Thutmose III, but had sole reign and Nefertiti appears to be in co - regency with Akhenaten and seems to enjoy sole reign after his death. Speculations on why the queens ruled are rife and hypothetical, since no answer can be derived from the ancient

¹ For the sake of consistency, differences or variance of preferred spelling of royal names by authors have been modified.

sources with regard to the unexplained low profile and non - inference of Thutmose III during his co - reign with Hatshepsut or why she did not marry the vizier Senemut and made him king with her being the royal heiress. The sources yield no answer as to Nefertiti's elevated position after Akhenaten's "religio - political rupture" with the Amen priesthood at Thebes. The aforesaid warrants ongoing research, especially in the light of various solutions that are offered (Cottrell 1966 : 105).

To arrive at an understanding of Hatshepsut's and Nefertiti's world, requires an in depth look at the ancient Egyptian culture. Culture is conceived as a dynamic concept. Knowledge with regard to the dynamics of other cultures serves to enhance an understanding of one's own culture and creates an awareness of the role and function of an individual in the community and society on the whole. To enable a holistic approach which take the sphere and dynamics of Egyptian culture into consideration, it is imperative that one should try to understand and accept the diversity in cultures alien to your own. One should bear in mind that one is removed in time and place from ancient Egypt and should therefore refrain from subjecting its culture to a Westernized perspective (Knapp 1988: 3 - 5).

1.3. Model of approach

The aim is to employ a cultural anthropological approach which conveys an interaction of interrelated social, political and religious factors in order to construct Hatshepsut's and Nefertiti's past. The aforesaid will coincide with other disciplines such as geography and archaeology. This will be extensively and comparatively presented in a sequence of socio - historical events that will encompass the interrelatedness of territorial problems intertwined with the battle for economic hegemony as well as social and political situations during the rule of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti and allow insight into the how and why they ruled.

The aim is to relate a cohesive manner in all spheres of Egyptian daily life and culture in its complexity. Culture integrates the separate sectors of human activities and emphasizes a relationship between these different sectors of activities (Rosman and Rubel 1992: 5-6).

A survey of ancient Egyptian culture encompasses aspects such as ideology, administration, military rivalry, resources and landrights. The former enhance an understanding of the ancient status quo that dictated cultural rules that were transmitted from the one generation to the other. Culture has no time constraints. Throughout infancy to adulthood, culture is learned through an ongoing process of "enculturation" (Rosman and Rubel 1992: 6-9). Individuals either choose to adhere or violate cultural rules. The aforesaid's behaviour with regard to the latter is influence by his social status and social' role in a social organization (Rosman and Rubel 1992: 17). The Egyptians adhered to culture through collective, co - operative endeavours to avoid any punitive actions that may be dealt out in the afterlife, as propagated in the ancient world view (Kemp 1989 : 129; James 1984: 101). The dominant cultural tradition is determined by the coexistence of aspects such as the powerful hegemonic political group merged with an economic system. The aforesaid inaugurate changes, aptly emphasize in the unusual prominence of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti who were female pharaohs. The aforementioned cultural aspects were relevant during the reign of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti, with the one difference that both queens twisted the ideological aspect to serve their own end.

Anthropologists assess alien cultures through objective fieldwork. The latter requires participant observation that is based on a reciprocal relationship with the individual of the different culture that is under scrutiny. The discipline of anthropology evolves around a unifying concept of culture. It concerns the usage and meaning of language. Cultural anthropology in correlation with archaeology aims to assess how cultures have changed through times.

This study takes in account: i) the family, marriage and kinship of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti; ii) the provisioning of society; iii) political organization; iv) religion and myths and, finally, symbolic systems and meanings (Rosman and Rubel 1992: 14-15, vii-ix).

Chapter 2: A survey of literature

A wealth of data exists with regard to the role and status of Hatshepsut, but scant information regarding Nefertiti's supposedly varied roles (Robins 1993 : 54). Throughout the years scholars that had access to primary sources, entered into lively debates on the details of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti's role and status. Interesting and often less than adequate information has come to light which, contributed in general to a clearer appreciation of what is known about these women.

Some of these works, however, do not engage the most recent scholarly views. The latter differs from "pre-packaged constructions" on the basis of new archaeological, literary or historical interpretations and perspectives (Grabbe 1984 : xxvi). Scholars have attempted to determine root causes for changes in the positions that the two women held, but are not in agreement as to how and why Hatshepsut ruled with seemingly non - inference of Thutmose III and whether Nefertiti was one of the co - or sole rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty and if the impetus to the religious revolution should be attributed to her. The aim here is to display different interpretations regarding this topic, starting with very early works and conclude with more contemporary works and a synthesis.

2.1. Hatshepsut

Gardiner 1961: 182 concedes that Hatshepsut's role in ancient Egyptian history is controversial. In an attempt to validate why Hatshepsut ruled, Rawlinson (1886 : 170, 173, 177, 187) roots a mythical basis to explain why a female ruled. He propagates that Hatshepsut who acted as sovereign, derived her authority from a law passed by ancient mythical monarchs before Sneferu. He perceives Hatshepsut as one of the female rulers whose rule is intermediate between Nitocris of the sixth dynasty of Manetho and Sabak - nefru - ra that was in co - regency with Amenemhat IV of the twelfth dynasty. He regards her as a

woman with an outstanding personality in her judgement of people. Rawlinson perceives her as be "clever," "bold," "ambitious" and "unscrupulous". He suggests that she displayed these traits optimally to influence the administration of the government under Thutmose II who appeared to be of "weak temper" and unduly young.

After Thutmose II's death, though acting as regent of Thutmose III, Hatshepsut appears to enjoy full sovereignty, attributing to herself paramount titles such as "Queen of Upper and Lower Egypt" and "The living Horus". Monuments that have been found at Thebes in Wadi Magharah exemplify a co - regency of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III for a space of seven years, but other documents discovered, relate her name as being placed first in later years and convey the idea that Hatshepsut kept Thutmose III effectively in subjection (Rawlinson 1886: 177, 178, 187).

Rawlinson ascribes an ancestral law and the youth of both Thutmose II and Thutmose III as being instrumental in Hatshepsut's manipulation of usurping the power to rule. He concedes that it is unthinkable that a man of Thutmose III's stature would passively have accepted the status quo. He is emphatic that no revelation can be derived from ancient sources as to any negativity in Thutmose III's conduct towards Hatshepsut during her reign; nor as to what had happened to the queen at the end.

Baikie (1929 : 51 - 57, 75) perceives Hatshepsut as a clever, "masterful and strong - willed woman". He propagates that Hatshepsut had the foresight to see that she and her daughters, Neferure and Merytra Hatshepsut might be estranged from the throne if Thutmose III, son of Aset or Isis, a secondary wife of Thutmose II, becomes king. Contrary to what Rawlinson suggests, Baikie argues that in Egypt prejudice against female pharaohs existed. Therefore, should Thutmose III marry one of Hatshepsut's daughters, preference might be given to Thutmose III, since Egypt was a patriarchal society and males became

king.

Both Hatshepsut and Thutmose III employed myth to legitimize their claim to kingship. Hatshepsut claimed a divine birth and propagated that her father, Thutmose I, introduced her to the court as his successor. Thutmose III responded by claiming that the god Amen appointed him to be king — a factor that was accepted by both the reigning pharaoh and court (Baikie 1929 : 51, 57, 61).

Baikie (1929: 55-58) is in agreement with Rawlinson that Hatshepsut's name was omitted from public inscriptions and decrees in the first seven years of Thutmose III's nominal reign. He suggests that in the eighth year of the latter's reign, Hatshepsut, aided by a Laodicean faction, assumed the full titulary of a Pharaoh and kept Thutmose III in the background. A co - regency was established, with Hatshepsut being the dominant figure and the ensuing years of Hatshepsut's reign is perceived by some scholars such as Petrie, (in Baikie 1929: 65) "as years of peace and commerce" and by others, such as Breasted, (in Baikie 1929: 65) as a reign of "misfortune". The aforesaid relates to Hatshepsut's lack of military insight which failed to ensure the subjection of the Syrians even after her death.

A note of contradiction is apparent in Baikie's argument as to why Hatshepsut ruled. Despite the latter being "masterful" and "clever" she on the other hand feared a "thrusting" aside of her royal personage by a "young prince" (Baikie 1929 : 50-51). If Hatshepsut is considered "masterful" in the intellectual sense, then certainly she was able enough to counter any "thrusting" of her personage, which she certainly did. In his endeavour to point out how Hatshepsut ensured her position by her association with high officials, he fails to point out the real core in Hatshepsut's plot to succeed to power. In addition, he loses sight of the fact that despite being an Amen priest, Thutmose III could not count on the support of Hapusenb, Prime Minister and Amen High Priest, member of

Hatshepsut's party and to the Laodicean faction that served as catalyst in her decisive move toward kingship. According to Hayes (1978 : 82) Hatshepsut had influence in the administration of the land. Thus, she had access to the wealth of the land and could financially sustain her claim to the throne and it is questionable whether Thutmose III, son of a secondary queen and an Amen priest, could sustain his claim.

Lesko (1987 : 4) is in agreement with Baikie (1929 : 5) when she propagates that the reason why Hatshepsut ruled, stems from the latter's claim to royal descent, being the daughter of Thutmose I. According to the ancient belief, only the principal wife referred to as "God's Wife" could bear the legitimate successor to the throne. In the light of Hatshepsut bearing only daughters, Lesko propagates that Hatshepsut orchestrated a bloodless coup and grasp sovereignty with the help of influential courtiers and the priesthood. A paradoxical viewpoint is apparent in Lesko's (1987: 4) and Robins (1983: 70, 78) argument pertaining to the succession and divine birth theories.

Robins (1983:78) suggests that the term "God's Wife" in the 18th Dynasty distinctly refers to a priestly office held by royal women and should be seen as separate from the status and role of the king's principal wife. Robins not only refutes the idea postulated that Hatshepsut considered herself as a remnant of pure royal lineage, but also negates the existence of an "heiress" line that ensured pharaonic birthright.

Hayes (1978 : 106) suggests that the officialdom and priesthood tapped the Egyptian mythical belief displaying miracles and omens to legitimize Hatshepsut's rule. O' Connor, (in Trigger 1983 : 219) argues that Hatshepsut manipulated the succession system. Clayton (1994 : 105) considers Hatshepsut's efforts at making a great play of her divine birth, coupled to the highly revered memories of her father, Thutmose I, as a masterful ploy to legitimize her claim to rule. O' Connor, (in Trigger 1983: 219) provides an

exciting new angle in the scholarly debate as to why Hatshepsut ruled. His viewpoint alludes to the idea that a form of dualism is apparent in the reason why Hatshepsut turned her "symbolically critical matriarchal role" into real power. He ascribes Hatshepsut's decisive move to kingship as an act of a "dynastic defence mechanism" and personal ambition. O' Connor diverts from the general scholarly consensus pertaining Hatshepsut's support basis, namely that Hatshepsut enjoyed the support of both the officialdom and priesthood. He propagates that Hatshepsut lacked a unifying support basis in her endeavours to become king. He propagates that Thutmose III was supported by the Amen priesthood and that Hatshepsut enjoyed the support of the officialdom who enabled her to become king, whereas Thutmose III was supposed to ascend the throne, with him being the legitimize male heir to the throne.

References to a priestly support basis is amiss when Robins concedes that Hatshepsut exploited her regnal power to appoint powerful officials that will concede to a co - regency with Thutmose III (Robins 1993 : 47). She propagates that Hatshepsut perceived a co - regency with Thutmose III as a stepping stone in her way to attain pharaonic power. Robins searches for an ulterior move in the granting of the officialdom's concession to Hatshepsut and embarks on a theory of materialism in the Marxist sense. She suggests that in the absence of a king, and considering that Hatshepsut was the effective paramount head of an administration that steered the economy of the land, the social elite feared possible rationalization of their hereditary and financial position in an administration under the control of Thutmose III (Robins 1993: 47). Robins, however, loses sight that Thutmose III was a mere youth at the time of the co - regency and also lacked an influential support base to overthrow Hatshepsut's claim to rule.

Both Lesko (1987 : 6) and Petrie, (in Baikie 1929: 74) concede that Hatshepsut had a brilliant reign which was characterized by commerce and the establishment of "exquisite" construction projects. Murray (1954 : 32, 49) and

Watterson (1991 : 139) portray Hatshepsut as a patron of the arts, as well as someone who was responsible for the expansion of foreign commerce which is exemplified in her expedition to the land of Punt. These scholars advocate that Hatshepsut directed her forceful character towards the stimulation of the indigenous economy and prominent adherence to religious activities. Watterson (1991 : 139) aligns herself with what the majority of scholars suggest, namely that Hatshepsut came to power with the aid of the priesthood and the officialdom. She, however, provides new insight as to why Hatshepsut occupied herself with works of peace and art. Watterson (1991 : 139) and Tyldesley (1994 : 229) suggest that Hatshepsut lacked the warlike skills of her predecessors — an assumption that is effectively waylaid by Redford (1993 : 149).

Research to discover new dimensions to determine Hatshepsut's role in the interrelated political, social and religious spheres, is done on an ongoing basis by scholars that latched onto the fact that Hatshepsut was a peace loving woman. The controversial debate amongst scholars, evolving around the idea whether Hatshepsut's "peaceful" reign encompassed military activity or not, has given rise to diverse hypotheses (Cottrell 1966 : 38). Redford (1993 :149) and Lesko (1987 : 6) advocate a reassessment of Hatshepsut's reign. These two scholars advocate a modification of the idea that Hatshepsut was a peaceloving woman who never led armies to Nubia. Lesko propagates that Hatshepsut has undertaken four successful military campaigns and accounts one to Nubia that compelled Egypt to secure her southern flank. Redford (1993: 149) concedes that Hatshepsut in person, at least once, led a military campaign.

Other scholars take the opposite view and stress that Hatshepsut was military inactive and had never led armies into Syria or Nubia (cf. Baikie 1929 : 65; Murray 1954 : 50; Cottrell 1966: 38; Tyldesley 1994 : 229). Inconsistency in Cottrell's argument is apparent when he on the one hand concedes that Hatshepsut's rule was "peaceful" and that she had not fought battles, but on the

other hand repudiates Murray's perception of Hatshepsut as an art loving person and peace devotee, and propagates Murray's reconstruction as being naive. Cottrell's theory regarding the naivety of Murray's idea, is questionable, since both arguments carry a parallel connotation of an image of peace. Inconsistency in Clayton's argument is also apparent, since he first applauds Hatshepsut's military prowess, but on the other hand emphasises military inactivity and propagates that control in Syria slipped under her reign (Clayton 1994: 102, 108). The latter idea is contradicted by Baikie (1929 : 65) when he maintains that Syria remained submissive during Hatshepsut's rule.

Tyldesley (1994 : 208) apparently echoes Rawlinson's idea (1886 : 170) when she propagates a consistency in Egyptian thought pertaining kingship from the Old Kingdom until the Late Period. Her speculations on why Hatshepsut did not adhere to conventionalism and proclaimed herself as king, address important issues that to a degree run parallel with some of Rawlinson's ideas. Both scholars emphasize Hatshepsut's concern of being "passed over" or the "thrusting" aside of the latter's royal personage in favour of Thutmose III.

Tyldesley (1994 : 223) raises profound ideas in her speculations as to whether Thutmose III was too weak to rule. She, however, needs to qualify at what time slot in Hatshepsut's reign she considers Thutmose III to have been weak. She negates speculations that Hatshepsut was driven by an urge for power and argues that Hatshepsut only seized power after seven years of a co - regency with Thutmose III. She suggests that Hatshepsut's control over the treasury ensured effective rule over the officialdom and indirectly ensured that Thutmose III as claimant to the throne, was powerless without resources. On this matter, one detects a degree of consensus between Tyldesley (1994 : 228) and Robins (1993 : 47).

A profound appraisal of the scholarly debate as to how and why Hatshepsut ruled, compels one to assess all cultural aspects as well as reasons purported

as to why and how Hatshepsut attained power. One gathers that a well balanced interaction of the ancient Egyptian world view and ideology provide some insight into the latter. In conjunction to the aforesaid the following may be suggested: i) the contrasting factor of Hatshepsut's and the officialdom's fear of being marginalized compared to her strength of character; ii) confidence in her abilities and a shrewd mind enabled her to manipulate the conventions of the land. In this manner a female Pharaoh could be accommodated and the needs of Egypt could also be addressed.

Resourcefulness and immense wealth were requirements that Hatshepsut had to face to ensure a continuity in the state of affairs and to placate the officialdom. The latter was stratified into the standard bureaucracy that controlled the daily state affairs and the high ranking officials whom the Pharaoh appointed to the priesthood. A bereft Hatshepsut, firstly of her father, Thutmose I and secondly of Thutmose II in a short period, could have emphasized a perception with regard to the mortality of kings. This could have caused the officialdom to find the accommodation of a **young** and **new** pharaoh — such as Thutmose III — that was unable at that stage to enact a continuity with the ancestral ways of doing things psychologically and administratively disruptive.

I certainly align myself with Tyldesley (1994 : 223) and Robins (1994 : 228) when they suggest that Hatshepsut's control over the officialdom ensured a co-regency with Thutmose III with her being the dominant partner, leaving Thutmose III powerless without resources. I strived, however, to qualify the support of the officialdom and attempted to point out that Hatshepsut effectively addressed diverse needs at that period of time and ensured that Thutmose III enjoyed some prominence, but no power to upset the affairs of the state.

2.2. Nefertiti

Nefertiti's background is a controversial issue amongst scholars. Hayes (1978 : 281) and Clayton (1994 : 121) propagate that Nefertiti is thought to be the

daughter of Tiy and the Troop Commander, Ay, son of Yuya and Tuya and apparently brother of Queen Tiy. Desroches-Noblecourt, (in Cottrell 1966: 102) leaves Nefertiti's parentage an open question.

Most scholars concede that Nefertiti had six daughters. Hayes (1978 : 88) suggests that Meryet - Aton, Meketaton and Ankhespaton - who later reigned as Tutankhamon's queen — appear to have been born before Year 6. Bas reliefs in different sepulchral chambers portray Nefer - nefru - Aton junior to be born between the Year 6 and 9 and Nefer - nefru - Re and Sotep - en - Re to be born between the Year 9 and the Year 12. Aldred, (in Cottrell 1966: 146) suggests that Akhenaten might have suffered from endocrine abnormalities and Cottrell purports that in the likelihood of such an event, all six daughters of Akhenaten might not have been his.

Cottrell (1966 : 126) advocates that Tutankhamon lived with Nefertiti at her Northern Palace in the last half decade of Akhenaten's reign, since Nefertiti and Akhenaten became estranged (Hayes 1978 : 281). A form of dualism is apparent in Murray's 1954: 55 argument when she raises possibilities that can shed light on their estrangement; namely that Nefertiti might not have acquiesced the new religion or that Akhenaten had a young male co - regent, namely Smenkhare, who usurped Nefertiti's place. Similar to the controversy pertaining to Nefertiti's birth, her death is also a controversial issue. Cottrell (1966 : 132) maintains that the cause and date of Nefertiti's death is unknown, but Clayton (1994 : 124) propagates that Nefertiti died soon after the Year 12 and that her burial at Amarna is exemplified by an ushabti figure bearing her cartouche that was found in a royal tomb.

2.2.1. Co - regency of Nefertiti and Akhenaten

Scholars derived Nefertiti's role as female sovereign from the kingly regalia that she wore and a symbolic interpretation induced from iconography and city architecture (Samson 1985 : 16). Deduced from the latter statement, Lesko

(1987 : 8) is awed by the unusual prominence and sense of equal power that Nefertiti and Akhenaten shared. In correlation with the ideas of Samson, Robins (1993 : 54) derives this perception of equity from vignettes of Nefertiti. The later is attested in the "true" blue pharaoh crown Nefertiti wore and her disregard of protocol, since Nefertiti is seen in sculpture groups standing to the right of Akhenaten, rather than to the left; all serve as indicators to prove that Nefertiti was elevated to the status of pharaohs. (cf. Lesko 1987 : 8).

Samson (1985 : 14), on the other hand, perceives an equality of the royal pair in the identical clothes they wore. Tyldesley (1994 : 235) emphasizes Nefertiti's role in religious activities and matters of state, which she derives from archaeological data that constantly depict Nefertiti in a posture of world overlordship on a Nile boat. She maintains that Nefertiti is portrayed as sole ruler after Akhenaten's death and thus suggests that Nefertiti was king.

Samson (1985 : 25) perceives Nefertiti's prominent participation in the "Jubilee Festival" wearing symbols of royal power, as an affirmation of Akhenaten's ploy to assign regality to her. She interprets scenes depicting Nefertiti as a smiting king destroying Egyptian enemies as a symbolic scene of her kingship, since Akhenaten ascended to the throne at a peaceful time that was accompanied by great wealth (cf. Cottrell 1966 : 120). Clayton (1994: 124) differs from these scholars, stressing that a literal interpretation should be adhered to with regard to this specific time.

Samson (1985 : 27) propagates that Nefertiti possessed inner strength and Watterson (1991 : 151) maintains that Nefertiti influenced her husband. Cottrell (1966 : 108) suggests that the innovative fashion, for example the "transparent" open coat - frock dresses and Nubian hairstyles, along with the rising prominence of Nefertiti and Queen Tiy during the Amarna period suggest an "overwhelming feminine influence" (cf. Samson 1985 : 18; Tyldesley 1994 : 233).

On another plane, Robins (1993 : 19) suggests that the king as a fount of power was accessible and could be influenced or controlled by the royal women. Weigall, (in Cottrell 1966 : 104) concedes that Akhenaten "elevated the position of women ...". Samson (1985 : 20) suggests that such a perception is exemplified in the feminisation of the phrase "He who Found the Aton" to "**She** who Found the Aton" that is inscribed on the "Nefertiti Pillars" of a temple and emphasizes the latter's regal and religious importance.

Cottrell (1966 : 108) suggests that Nefertiti played a fundamental role in the Aton cult which Akhenaten had established. Clayton (1994 : 120) suggests that Akhenaten's introduction of the Aton cult was a means to supersede and eradicate the Amen cult and its growing power (Trigger 1983 : 220). One thus deduces that Akhenaten's action was firstly politically and economically motivated, and secondly, religiously. Hayes (1978: 280) suggests that Akhenaten's eradication of the Amen cult should be perceived as an act that was religiously rather than politically motivated, since the priesthood at that time was loyal to the pharaoh. The question that arises constitutes to which pharaoh Hayes was referring to, since Akhenaten was at first in a co - regency with Amenhotep III who adhered to the Amen cult as opposed to Akhenaten's Aton cult.

After a failed attempt at a coexistence of an Aton and Amen temple at Karnak, Akhenaten and Nefertiti established a capital city at Amarna where temples with open courts became the focal points of religious activities that was based on the maat principle (cf. Clayton 1994: 122; Trigger 1983 : 265). The portrayal of Nefertiti offering a model of **Maat**, the goddess of "truth" reaffirms Nefertiti's innovative ways, since it is traditionally a king's offering. She deviated from the traditional role that women played in temples, such as playing the sistrum (Samson 1985 : 14, 19).

2.2.2. Synthesis

In an appraisal of the scholarly debate that evolves around the role and status of Nefertiti, it is evident that Nefertiti is highly revered by most scholars. Nefertiti symbolically and physically embodied and enacted a kingly role. Some scholars adhered to a literal interpretation of artefacts and suggest that scenes that involve Nefertiti, are based on reality, thus, on the "presence of events" (Baines 1995: 2). If one follows this route, then one should make a literal inference from the evidence and conclude that a co - regency between Nefertiti and Akhenaten existed, though unrecorded on this point. The aforesaid coincides with the views of Tyldesley (1994: 235) and Samson (1985: 14). On the other hand, some scholars maintain that such scenes project the royal ideology and served propagandistic purposes.

An unrecorded co - regency does not present such a big obstacle, if one takes in account Akhenaten's sluggish attitude towards state matters and his lack of visits to his Foreign Office. These matters were not high on Akhenaten's priority list. Added to this factor is the fact that Akhenaten refuted many ideas in the ancient royal ideology and instituted new one's and might have considered the new titles and insignia assigned to Nefertiti as surpassing those of any previous pharaoh, and as fitting for a pharaoh of that period.

If Cottrell is correct in his assumption that Akhenaten might have portrayed abnormalities — physical or mental — coupled to the increasing importance and prominence of the status and role Nefertiti and Queen Tiy's, a co - regency could have been affected between Akhenaten and Nefertiti to assist the king in his crumbling physical state and crumbling state affairs. One should not negate the role that Queen Tiy could play in Akhenaten's life to affect the co - regency, since she was a veteran to state affairs in the period when she was still married to Amenhotep III and scholars concede that Queen Tiy lived at Akhetaten.

Chapter 3: Hatshepsut

3.1. Introduction

One learns of the existence and greatness of prominent ancient Egyptian women such as Hatshepsut and Nefertiti ^{and Cleopatra} from architectural and archaeological remains, artefacts and ancient texts that are not always "ipso facto wholly honest" (James 1984: 18). Remarkably, many facets of ancient Egyptian life either run parallel or are in total opposition to lives led by contemporary women, attested in aspects such as the legal status and social freedom that Hatshepsut and Nefertiti enjoyed. What really distinguish these queens from most of the preceding queens in Egypt, is the fact that though they defied Egyptian conventionalism, they successfully attained pharaonic power in a male dominated society. To reach an understanding as to why and how these queens succeeded in becoming pharaoh, a plausible reconstruction of their political, religious and social background in interaction with other aspects on a lesser scale will shed some light on the aforesaid.

3.2. Politics

A broad sweep of ancient Egypt's political history will enable one to assess Egypt's political ideology which was perpetuated by an intertwinement of kingship and religious ritual; cosmology; warfare aimed at establishing political and economic hegemony and the securing of territorial borders. These factors coincide at times with cultural facets such as art, architecture, kingship and religion. One needs to be aware of the precepts and beliefs of ancient Egypt to reach an understanding of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and more specifically Hatshepsut's, policies and behaviour (O' Connor 1983 : 189).

3.3. State formation

Egypt was known in ancient times as **Keme(t)** which means Black Land Bardis (1988: 39). The Greek historian Herodotus (484 - 424 B.C.) called Egypt "the gift of the river". The Egyptian state developed along the Nile and comprised of Upper Egypt which again encompassed the Nile Valley Proper; and Lower Egypt which encompassed the delta. The Nile originates from a prehistoric river of the Pleistocene era and its valley and cliffs are marked by eight distinct edges and "terraces", usually called "cataracts" that exemplify a fluctuation in rainfall that alternated the flow of the river (Redford 1993 : 4). In the east Egypt is bordered by a plateau, hills and mountains which again border the Red Sea. The ecological and political interaction is evident in the geographical duality enveloped in religious ritual which the Memphite Theology propagates. The latter coincides with the propagandistic exploitation of architecture for political gains which is exemplified in the usage of the Step Pyramid which the king used as a setting and device to display himself (Kemp 1989 : 8, 55, 92).

The ease of cultivation in the Nile Valley led to the settlement of indigenous people on the fertile river bank of the Nile north of the Second Cataract (Kemp 1989 : 168). The utter dependence on the Nile by the ancient Egyptian and their perception of the sun as a "destructive agent" is juxtaposed by their worship of the sun-god as the creator (Murray 1954 : xix). Mounds of varying heights relate a tale of mud - brick houses that were built through successive reconstruction on high ground or in the lower reaches on sandy elevation. The inundation of the Nile in later periods restricted the development of increased village and urban areas necessitated by an increased population growth and, thus, led to the emergence of unsavoury living conditions. The changed layout in the plan of the ancient village of Deir el Medina relates to the accommodation of an increased population and serves to emphasize the former idea (Lesko 1989 : 102). The consumption of the court created a rising demand in produce which pressurized the agricultural surplus. It led to the extension of agriculture with no new development in basin irrigation to meet the

greater demand during the First Intermediate Period (cf. Trigger 1983 : 175, 176; Säve - Söderberg 1987 : 44). The reduction of cultivable land, the devaluation of land due to a fragmented political structure and trade in bulk, decline in the coercive resources of kingship, the granting of extraordinary combined powers to individuals, administrative corruption, theft of tombs in the Theban area, serve as pointers to indicate a weakening in royal economic power (cf. Trigger : 229, 249; Fagan 1977 : 14).

Settlement archaeology relates that state formation evolved from a simple to a complex society, since the farming communities around Hierakonpolis and Nagada — which were capitals of small states in the Predynastic Period — spread to large settlement areas (Kemp 1989 : 39). Redford (1993 : 8, 14) posited reasons for the establishment of towns which he derives from lexical material, namely that the protection of farmers and animals on the whole and from the inundation of the river coupled to the transportation and transshipment of goods, eventually created towns. The archaeological evidence not only convey a difference in the settlement tempo, but also convey the spiral effect of state - formation and disintegration due to internal strife. The historical and cultural anthropological interaction pertaining the Proto - Kingdom state formation that had been inaugurated by internal warfare, can be deduced from what the Narmer Palette propagates (Kemp 1989 : 43). The disintegration of the Egyptian state can be relayed to internal dissension which caused the division of New Kingdom Egypt. A fragmentation under Takelot II during the Third Intermediate Period alludes to a recurrence of state formation right at the beginning in the Predynastic Period and heralded the onset of the subjugation of Egypt to Persian, Ptolemaic and Roman rule (cf. Quirke and Spencer 47; Trigger 1983 : 220).

Evolution in state formation is discernible in the union of incipient city states to form a central state in the Predynastic Period to provincial states controlled by central government in the Middle Kingdom and finally in chiefdoms of the Late Period that conclude the fragmentation of central government. In the practice of royal

government control over provincial government in Egypt, an element of diffusion is discernible, since this particular practice was taken over by the Macedonians (Trigger 1983 : 336). On the contrary, Egyptians were expelled from government administration with the inclusion of Egypt into the Roman Empire in 30BC (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 196).

3.4. Culture and kingship

Egypt's maintenance of its cultural identity, contrasts with areas that were dominated and cultured by it, such as certain Nubian areas. When its own culture came under pressure of foreign civilizations, it adapted ideologically, institutionally and technologically to survive. After the expulsion of foreign rulers such as the Hyksos by the Theban liberators Kamose and Ahmose, the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty embarked on an expansionist policy to create a " buffer zone " against foreign menace. They employed the term "Nine Bows" to indicate foreign people which were destroyed by a variety of means (cf. Redford 1993 : 51, 27; Hayes 1978 : 100). Hatshepsut, granddaughter of Ahmose and daughter of the warrior - king Thutmose I, perpetuated the pharaoh's war policy in combatting the Asiatic menace in her undertaking of four military campaigns which coincided with her rejuvenation of Egypt's trade with foreign neighbours (Lesko 1987 :4, 6). Clayton (1994 :108) does not ascribe any military prowess to Hatshepsut, since he holds that internally, local princes allied with the kingdom of Mitanni and Hatshepsut allowed Syria and Lebanon to slip from Egyptian control.

Technological advancement is exemplified in the innovation of the **shaduf** in Akhenaten's time. The flexibility of the Egyptian culture is furthermore enhanced by the fact that despite the intrusion of foreign languages, the Egyptian language and writing systems not only surpassed foreign domination, but formed part of the tools that enhanced the enculturation of the Libyans and Kushites. The latter idea is exemplified by the Egyptian pit - orientation evident in Kush (cf. Trigger 1983 : 194 - 347; Säve - Söderberg 1987 : 44). Demotic, replaced by Aramaic and Arabic testify

to the evolution in script and language used in Egypt during foreign rule (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 49 - 55).

Robins (1983 : 75) and Rawlinson (1886 : 170, 178) advocate diverse reasons for Hatshepsut's shrewd application of a system in ancient Egypt that enabled two kings to rule Egypt simultaneously. Robins suggests that this system was initially affected for the smooth transference of power from an ageing king to a young ruler, and points out that Hatshepsut moulded this system to her own needs to become the dominant partner in her co - regency with Thutmose III. Rawlinson suggests that Hatshepsut orientated herself to her ancestral mythic past in which a law had been passed that permits women rulers, and usurped the practical implication of the equity principle in royal circles that rightfully gave Hatshepsut access to become the dominant partner in the co - regency, since Thutmose III was too young to rule effectively. According to Maine's theory, one can ascribe Hatshepsut's dominant position to a decline in her family that enabled the state i.e., the administrative government and Amen priesthood an increase of power to regulate the affairs of the state as they see fit i.e., by legitimize Hatshepsut's claim to rule (Bardis 1988 : 17).

On another plane, regarding the attainment of kingship in ancient Egypt through marriage to the "heiress", Robins (1983 : 69, 70) suggests that the hypothesis of kingship through marriage to the "heiress" needs rethinking, since the right to the throne through brother - sister marriages were not consistently practiced during the rule of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Bardis (1988 : 44, 45) advocates that during the rule of the Eighteenth Dynasty seven kings married their sisters and asserts that various theories exist as to the origin of this practice. It is suggested that this practice is rooted in myth that relates the tale of the marriage of the goddess Isis to her brother Osiris for fertility reasons. It is furthermore perceived as a mechanism to preserve the dynastic succession and ensure property continuity, and according to the Wilson - Wallis theory, originated due to the partial unavailability of mates within the consanguineal unit.

If one elaborates on the latter idea it is noteworthy that Hatshepsut, though relatively young, did not re - marry after Thutmose II's death. It would appear that besides Thutmose III who was a mere child, no eligible royal males from the consanguineal clan seemed available and that the death of Thutmose II left a political vacuum in Egypt into which Hatshepsut stepped as a "defense mechanism" to exercise her right to the throne. It would seem that the "heiress" theory cannot be wholly refuted since, though not "consistently practiced" the persistence of the brother - sister union of which Hatshepsut's own marriage and possibly that of her daughter Neferure to Thutmose III, seem to exemplify the idea that transference of kingship was ideally conform through the "heiress" who had a "symbolically critical matriarchal role" which Hatshepsut elevated into real power (cf. Trigger 1983 : 219; Grimal 1988 : 207). Tyldesley (1994: 226) and Grimal (1988 : 207) suggest that new evidence emerged that Neferure married Thutmose III which is contrary to the general perception that the former had an early death. On the other hand Robins (1983 : 76) suggests that Neferure never married Thutmose III because she enacted the ritual role of king's mother or king's principal wife on behalf of Hatshepsut.

Dating procedures such as radiocarbon dating which had been applied to archaeological data, gave rise to more reliable dating pertaining the regnal years of kingship. Trigger (1983 : 153, 185) advocates that the Turin Canon propagates contemporaneous rule of 175 reigns for a period of 220 - 280 years — a factor which Manetho in his "Aegyptiaca", i.e., his comprehensive history of ancient Egypt, negates since the latter suggests a proliferation of kings into four groups that ruled ancient Egypt (cf. Redford 1993 : 332; Trigger 1983 : 153). Gardiner (1961: ix) perceives the latter as a "Manethonian corruption [s]" of the names of the kings. Zuhdi (1992: 22-24, 30) echoes the sentiments of Gardiner when he questions the validity of Manetho's own sources to the history of the New Kingdom on the basis that Manetho negated the king's prenomen in preference to a citing of their nomens. However, most scholars concede that Hatshepsut and Thutmose III shared a co - regency for twenty - two years, but Lesko (1989 : 101) ascribes a

reign of twenty years to Hatshepsut. Despite the omission of her rule from the official kings - list, Robins (1983 : 75) maintains that Thutmose III's regnal dates are used to assert their joint reign (cf. Baikie 1929 : 55 ; O' Connor 1983 : 218).

The Egyptian society ascribed to demonstrated descent which is exemplified by a segmentary lineage system that is manifested in lengthy written genealogies which were religiously cultivated (Bardis 1988 : 7, 39). Kingship was determined by patrilineal descent and based on the hereditary principle, but was at times determined by the non - compliance to secular conventional expectations or by the outcome of force. The former idea is exemplified by Hatshepsut, a female pharaoh, who received her **nekhbet** - five - fold titles of a pharaoh and through her crowning was legitimated as pharaoh (Kitchen 1966 : 107). Lesko (1987 : 4, 6) purports that Hatshepsut enabled her crowning as pharaoh through a coup against Thutmose III with the help of powerful courtiers, administrators and the Amen priesthood who performed an oracle to appoint her as the divine pharaoh. The accomplishment of rule gained by force is exemplified by the Eighteenth Dynasty ruler, Horemheb, who was a commoner, but became king (cf. Trigger 1983 : 224; Knapp 1988 : 180).

The Egyptian world view sustained a royal ideology which enshrined an idealized perception of the political, religious and social status quo that concrete visual forms such as the temple reliefs of Hatshepsut at Deir el - Bahri aptly display. With regard to the latter, Frandsen (1992 : 57) is highly critical of the nature of information that is conveyed in pictorial representations, since he purports that the Egyptian ideology is interwoven with religious texts and pictorial depictions. The idea of **maat** on which kingship was based, had great prominence in the Egyptian world view, for not only did it counterbalance the king's actions against divine approval, but administrative and judicial decisions were taken in accordance to it. Throughout all the periods in ancient Egypt, the political and religious spheres are merged in the paramount position of kingship and royal cult which around the government institutions evolved (O' Connor 1983 : 189 - 223).

Various theories are ascribed to the rise of the Egyptian pharaonic monarchy. Some scholars allot the latter to an advancement in irrigation technology, but Redford (1993 : 13) holds that the establishment of irrigation was "followed" naturally by the development of improved techniques that were in concurrence with the establishment of the monarchy. Säve - Söderberg (1987 : 44), on the other hand, suggests that the Pharaonic times are characterized by centuries of decay due to low Niles and inefficient, primitive irrigation. He ascribes an improvement in the Egyptian agriculture to the **saqiya** that was introduced during the Persian or Ptolemaic rule. The question that arises, pertains the assumption of responsibility for the practical implementation of irrigation.

The disciplines of archaeology, cultural anthropology and history interact in the form of written and pictorial sources, and field observations to determine the variations in the Nile floods and seasonal rainfall in Egypt. These sources enable one to assess the economic repercussions of a low Nile, which resulted in competing demands for surplus and low agricultural returns that led to famine, as propagated in the, "Admonitions of Ipuwer" (Trigger 1983 : 180). The annual Nile flood depends on the Ethiopian summer rains, since the Nile originates in Lake Victoria in eastern Africa and flows into the Mediterranean Sea (Quirke and Spencer 1992 :16). A low Nile affects the agricultural processes of ploughing, reaping and aeration that is carried out by conscript labour. The importance of the Nile height is exemplified by the economic, ecological and political interaction that is recorded on the Palermo Stone which gives a relation of a royal procession known as the "Following of Horus" that coincided with the yearly recording of the Nile height through nilometers or temple quays to establish crop taxation (Trigger 1983 : 58, 179).

Efficient government could minimize the effects of natural disasters by developing locally a successful water economy as exemplified by the following cases: water was brought on donkey-back to waterpoints at the workmen's village at Deir - el Medina from where it was distributed; in Akhetaten water was obtained from wells and in other cases, water was raised by a **shaduf** or by the hand - filling of jars and

in the Roman period water was obtained by a waterwheel driven by oxen known as a **saqiya** (cf. Trigger 1983: 255, 326; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 54). Kemp (1989: 10) purports that irrigation was controlled locally and was not perceived as a matter for the government. The latter ideas seem to emphasize that Redford (1993: 13) is correct in his assumption that the emphasis placed on the development of irrigation coupled to the rise of the pharaonic dynasty, is misplaced.

The more contemporary view of Smith and Redford (1976: 13) with regard to the rise of a pharaonic dynasty juxtaposes the hypothesis of Petrie, (in Smith and Redford 1976: 13) in the sense that Redford denounces Petrie's hypothesis which encompasses the idea that the rise of a pharaonic monarchy can be ascribed to the invasion of a "superior dynastic race" in the predynastic period. Smith and Redford hold that the Egyptian bifurcation was much older than the Gerzean. Redford (1993: 13) also negates the theory of the economic historians who suggest that a "clash" between two economies is responsible for the rise of the pharaonic dynasty, since he denounces any intolerance amongst the diverse hunting, pastoral and farming communities and advocates a merger of the aforesaid in the Nilotic area. He ascribes a twofold theory to the rise of the pharaonic monarchy. Redford (1993: 13) suggests that trade and more precisely, the entrepreneurial skill of individuals combined with quick riverine transport and the control of manageable floodplain areas at time of inundation gave rise to the First Dynasty, as was the case in the valley of Aswan and the First Cataract to Abydos that was controlled by a chiefdom who became the first royal family. The latter idea alludes to a Marxist capitalist ideology that evolves around the theory that those who control the economy, control the people and seems apt to ancient Egypt's socio - economic circumstance (Croatto 1982 : 64).

A turning point pertaining to kingship is evident in a shift in focus from the Old Kingdom traditional concept which encompassed the idea that the king is perceived as the territorial ruler and earthly embodiment of the god Horus to an equation of kingship to the "Son of Ra" and the pre - eminency of the sun as supreme force in

the New Kingdom to finally, a concept that reiterated parallels in concrete manifestations of kingship between the Late Period Nectanebo II statues and the Old Kingdom Khafra statue. The former relates a difference of scale between animal - god and king and conveys an image of "royal dependence upon divine help". The political and interaction is exemplified in the escapist notion in Egyptian thought regarding the fragmentation of central authority which is attributed to the mortality of kings and their disregard of *maat* (cf. Trigger 1983 : 224, 291; Kemp 1989 : 197 - 198). The latter factor is emphasized by a short reign of four years of Thutmose II who died young (Trigger 1983 : 224). Grimal (1992: 207) differs on what Trigger posited with regard to the duration of Thutmose II's rule, since he ascribes a rule of fourteen years to the latter. Thutmose II's death and its aftermath in the circles of the court served as contributing factors that enabled Hatshepsut to ascend the throne (Lesko 1987 : 4).

3.5. Government and economy

Throughout all the periods the central government aimed at maintaining political and economic hegemony through the management of resources, the maintenance of justice and order and the organization of the cult by an efficient bureaucracy and priesthood. The New Kingdom government was characterized by an internal government, the administration of conquest and the dynasty proper with the most important officials reporting directly to the king as the fountainhead of power (Trigger 1983 : 207, 331). The efficient management of Egypt's economy depended on a strong centralized government in concurrence with a bureaucracy who embodied rank differences and controlled Egypt's economic system of exchange (Kemp 1989 : 111).

Thorough organization of storage and distribution of natural resources, labour, technology and transport ensured that the state could provide for its people for the best part of antiquity. The state had the role of employer and provider in a complexity of land holding patterns and economic activities. The establishment of

economic hegemony relates a complex and extensive marketing system that not only ensured economic gains for the nobility, but also opened the door to traders. The flow of goods to the Northeast might be interpreted as trade being carried out on a local basis (cf. Trigger 1983 : 215, 326; James 1984 : 253). Robins (1987 : 13) propagates that the latter factor is seldom depicted in tomb scenes that rather evolved around a depiction of the activities of the rich. This socio - economic model is patterned to Marx's capitalist ideology, since it alludes to the idea that the system is only profitable to those who own, control and profit from that system, negating the fact that trade was carried out minimally on an inclusive basis (Croatto 1982 : 64).

Egypt had a well developed administration system through which the central government displayed its coercive powers to rule the Egyptian population. In the local government of the Old and Middle Kingdom up to the mid - Eighteenth Dynasty, the mayor and the Medjay police force were responsible for the enforcement of justice and social order (cf. Kemp 1989 : 185; Trigger 1983 : 211). A paradox is apparent in the carrying out of law and order by the Medjay, since, despite the fact that the latter was guilty of " unruly behaviour" they were expected to control the Egyptian populace (Redford 1993 : 207). The latter alludes to the dualistic Egyptian thought pertaining order and chaos once again testify to the manipulative skills that the royal ideology encompassed, since it used outsiders to perform mundane tasks that in no way affected the perfect image of the pharaoh. The latter perception is emphasized in an assessment of the Speos Artemidos inscription of queen Hatshepsut, in which she claims that **she** delivered Egypt from the destructive rule of the Hyksos (Kemp in Trigger 1983 : 155).

During the New Kingdom the provincial governors controlled conquered land; the crown prince controlled the military and battalion commanders controlled Egyptian garrisons. The administrative body in Thebes and Memphis comprised of a Treasury, a military deputy and kenbet - councils that were controlled by a vizierate

who tried civil and judicial cases. The political, socio - economic interaction is exemplified in Egypt's foreign relationships during the New Kingdom period and encompassed a broad spectrum of commercial and diplomatic links. It evolved around the establishment of power and the usurping of resources in foreign territories to perpetuate Egyptian economic life with the aid of the military or by way of peaceful trade expeditions such as the one undertaken by Hatshepsut to the land of Punt in her sixth or seventh regnal year or in the consolidation of power through intermarriage of royal daughters into other power groups during Egypt's expansionistic endeavours. The situation became reversed when Egypt was subjugated to labour and payment of tribute during the Greek period (cf. Hayes 1978 : 101; Trigger 1983 : 82, 207 - 262; Lesko 1989 : 101).

The Egyptian social structure remained through the different periods unaltered as a moiety of non - kin social groups which constituted of the privileged nobility and the underprivileged peasants — when viewed from below through a materialistic perspective (Trigger 1983 : 81, 202). The Egyptians were traditionalists — subsequently hereditary of office and a sense of congeniality towards the pharaoh influenced the Pharaoh's appointment of officials. (Trigger 1983: 202; Robins 1989: 74).

Hatshepsut enjoyed great wealth, since she controlled the resources of the civil and religious institutions, and enjoyed the support of powerful priests and courtiers such as Hapusenb, Prime Minister and High Priest of Amen; Menkh, son of Ineni and the brothers Senemut and Senemen who were the "pillar[s]" of the state (Baikie 1929 : 79, 82). The interaction of politics and religion is exemplified by the fact that Egypt was a "sacerdotal" state who maintained a symbiotic relationship with provincial temples by subjecting the latter to central government decrees (cf. Kemp 1989 : 190 - 193; Trigger 1983 : 107). The religious institutions were concerned with land and enhanced the political and economic dominance of the king, since it regulated the storage and distribution of surplus commodities of which the rich grossly benefited (Trigger 1983 ; 202). The propagandist ploy which lies dormant in

the Egyptian political make - up, is exemplified in relief depictions on temple walls, for example, the reliefs portrayed on the walls of the Deir el - Bahri temple that portray Hatshepsut as Egypt's provider (Cottrell 1966 : 52).

Religion and the economy interact in the sense that the Egyptian world view sustained the economic practices and enhanced the exploitation of the lower classes. The importance attached to the cosmos was inextricably linked to the daily life of Egyptians. Myth propagated a belief that the king was divinized as the custodian of the land, which invariably means that the king was in a position to advance royal interest and was accountable solely to himself (Trigger 1983 : 196). Since the third millennium central government subjected the behaviour and property of Egyptians to a scribal elite (Kemp 1989 : 112). The psychological basis of the royal ideology emerges in its encouragement of the masses to pay taxes linked to promises of advanced administrative careers (Trigger 1983 : 196, 60). Besides the king, the accumulation of wealth was the privilege of the hierarchical administrative personnel who, according to the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus, received increased ration distributions and had access to the surplus of commodities in contrast to farmers who paid taxation of up to 30% of the crop farmed on a rental basis and who relied on gleaning of the fields to expand their income (cf. Kemp 1989 : 126, 191; Trigger 1983 : 68; James 1984 : 122; Robins 1989 : 111).

The social division in this particular field of the labour force where women adhered to the gleaning of the fields, relays a sense of discrimination in the working environment that contrasts with Lesko's (1987 : 20) theory of "equal pay for equal work" because, according to Robins, (in Lesko 1989: 112), of an official view that encompassed an idealized perception of the role of women which restricted them from an opportunity to qualify for equal work. Thus, the principle of equality is to a degree questionable. The mundane tasks done by women are seldom depicted in tomb art and Zagarell, (in Lesko 1989 : 121) holds that on the few occasions that women are represented, an allusion to the construction of women's lives rather

than the actual conditions of those lives is conjectured from a male perspective.

The political, economic and religious interrelationship is exemplified by the fact that the Egyptian civilization was largely sedentary and agricultural and adhered to crop cultivation and animal husbandry. Prior to the coinage system, temple administrators implemented a barter system that was based on payment in kind in accordance to a scale of values known as *pefsu* to orchestrate the accumulation, storage and distribution of food supplies (Kemp 1989 : 117). A papyrus of the Thirteenth Dynasty manifests the coercive powers of the government in its relation of punitive action in the form of conscript labour that Egyptians, who failed to meet their obligations, were subjected to. The Neferirkara archives shed light on details pertaining the fetching of the daily income (Trigger 1983 : 83, 89). Local taxes were collected by the mayor and handed over to the king's vizier. During the New Kingdom the temples' role encompassed the granting of access to mineral sources, finalizing leasing arrangements and renting of temple lands to farmers, as propagated by the Wilbour Papyrus, to ensure the sustainability of the country's economy for the realization of "grandiose royal schemes" that did not encompass benevolence towards the lower strata (cf. Kemp 1989 : 195; Trigger 1983 : 192). Religious - political processions by canal or road from Karnak to Deir el - Bahri, exemplified the dualistic function of temples, since it served to consolidate the "physical and economic dominance" of temples (Kemp 1989 : 206, 210).

All these factors serve as symbols to convey the relative easy life of the elite class formed by the male scribal bureaucracy in contrast to a life led by the peasants. Egypt was a man's world and there were only a few exceptional times when women gained entry into it, as was the case with the female pharaoh Hatshepsut. She is seen depicted in male attire in iconography which might have been representative of the image Egyptian artists had with regard to her role in society (Robins 1989 : 106). Her role in society was acquired through a display of innovative leadership skills that were ingrained in her own royal personage and lineage and a "working" of the administrative and priestly system to ensure her position as pharaoh which was

backed by the immense wealth of the Eighteenth Dynasty in order to placate the officialdom who supported her (cf. Tyldesley 1994: 223; Robins 1994: 228).

3.6 Religion and world view

An appraisal of the ancient world view conveys the interrelatedness of the religious, economic and socio - political situation (Trigger 1983 : 188). Paradoxical trends are apparent in the world view. The Egyptians adhered to an optimistic, "vitalistic" but passive world view that encompasses a perception that their gods, as symbols, are part of their reality (cf. Bleeker 1969: 41, 104; Deist and le Roux 1995 : 108). Hornung (1992 : 91) on the other hand suggests that the Egyptians did **not** accommodate a "passive unquestioning acceptance" of the status quo but the latter fails to point out any period of revolt or dissatisfaction. I tend to differ from Hornung, since with Hatshepsut's ascendance to the throne — a female — no civil war erupted and the status quo persists. The religious life of ancient Egypt was practiced on a personal, local and national level in the periods preceding the reign of Akhenaten (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 55; Trigger 1983 : 264). However, an assessment has to be made to determine in how far the Egyptian civilization was accommodated in this particular world view.

Deist and le Roux (1995: 108) suggest a reciprocal relationship between religion and the community and suggest that religion either change or re - direct a community or enhanced the status quo in establishing a "socially stabilising function". Bleeker (1969 : 73, 78, 99) adheres to a phenomenological approach in his discussion of the ancient Egyptian concept of god, its diversity of form, the conception of man and worship. He propagates a religious anthropological dualism into which man's relationship to a god on the one hand and the profound inequality of their beings on the other, fit. Though the Pharaoh was perceived as a divine god, he was in submission of the sun - god and considered not his equal. Contrary to what Breasted, (in Bleeker 1969: 43) advocate with regard to personal piety and moral consciousness amongst ancient Egyptians, Bleeker (1969 : 43) maintains that the latter idea was not a New Kingdom phenomenon, but prevailed through the

centuries. Inconsistency in Bleeker's argument (1969: 42-45) becomes apparent when he on the one hand negates autonomous spheres in Egyptian culture, but on the other maintains that religion is autonomous and develops to its own concepts. Bleeker is critical of Sethe's attempt to link religious and political processes, based on the interaction of processes in the Egyptian mythology which Sethe holds was formative to the foundation of a united Egypt under Menes.

Hornung (1992 : 95 - 101, 136) maintains that the Egyptians perceived death as a transitional phase to an afterlife that was idealistically depicted. Quirke and Spencer (1992 : 41) ascribe the invention of the writing of funerary texts on papyrus (The Book of the Dead) to Hatshepsut's reign. Lesko's (1987 : 20) suggested that the mortuary texts are found written on the insides of coffins of those who could afford it, thus emphasizing a factor that strengthens Marx's socio - economic view of religion. The funerary texts suggest that the deceased should have lived in accordance with **maat** and should have followed the practical advice for the afterlife in the Book of the Dead; the maps in the Books of the Two Ways and adhered to the Coffin Texts to qualify for an afterlife after facing the Judgement of the Dead (Quirke and Spencer 1992 :98). Bleeker (1969 : 105) affirms that the term **ma - a - kheru** equates the judgement that is passed on man's ethical - religious property and his cosmic worth according to spell 30 A in the Book of the Dead when man's heart, perceived as the organ of life, is weighed against **maat** on a scale (cf. Bleeker 1969 : 96; Hornung 1992 : 101). Ancient Egyptians preoccupation with man's fate after death, is exemplified by several perceptions they had as to life in the hereafter: the deceased lives in the grave, agrarian regions, firmament etc. (Bleeker 1969 : 106). The latter idea suggests an ecological and religious interaction which is apparent in the Egyptian expectation of an afterlife which is mirrored by a pastoral image that is conveyed by a description of the "Fields of Reeds" or " the Field of Rushes" in the Book of the Dead and is paralled to the regularity of the agricultural cycle (Redford 1993 : 11).

Though one derives from the Book of the Dead that the New Kingdom period is characterized by the "democratization" of religious expectations to be shared by all Egyptians regarding their immortality in the afterlife, it would seem that only the elite would become the "glorified deceased" that will go through the funerary ceremonial, as postulated in Spell 1 of the Book of the Dead (Bleeker 1969 : 48). On the one hand Trigger (1983 : 192) suggests that the Egyptian population at large was illiterate and literacy was the privilege of a minority and on the other hand Bleeker (1969 : 93, 103) propagates that the learning of ancient Egyptians was a merger of practical counsel and magic practice. Bleeker furthermore suggests that the aforesaid could side-step disaster by studying the Egyptian calendar in which "favourable" and "unfavourable" days are marked with five different signs or combination of signs. The question which arises pertains the manner in which the lower strata could have been educated and prepared for an afterlife.

The aforesaid could not read and no indication has been given as to the time and place the oral tradition was employed to educate the masses. The latter was annually involved in labour conscription during the agricultural season in the Egyptian year that consisted of three - four months seasons : Akhet, Peret and Shemu, and had observer status in important festivals that were conducted by priests or the king (James 1984 : 112, 118, 128). It appears as if the concept of **ma - at** is not fully accredited by all the Egyptians since the general protection of the socially underprivileged is sadly lacking (Hornung 1992 : 141). It would appear that the lower strata was deprived of a "threshold" to cross the "bridge" from profane to sacred time and thus were indirectly marginalized from entrance into a joyful afterlife and from a **nehet** (beginning) to **djet** (end) existence in the afterlife (cf. Eliade 1959 : 181; Hornung 1992 : 65).

Trigger (1983 : 197) and Bleeker (1969 : 40, 53, 73) maintain that the ancient Egyptian religion has a polytheist and cultic character and suggests that the nature of worship is apparent in myth, the sacred cultic acts and the religious conduct of life. Hornung (1992 : 39) and Bleeker (1969 : 104) concede that the ancient

Egyptian's point of orientation evolved around the past, myth and the institution of *maat*. Creation is a central theme in myths and is characterized by a variety of divine forms and names, as well as an array of associations that mirror important events in Egyptian life, such as the agricultural cycle which is closely intertwined with the Nile cycle (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 58, 60; Hornung 1992 : 40, 45). The latter idea links up with what Frankfort, (in Bleeker 1969: 41) suggests, namely that the divine manifestations of the power of the - sun, earth and certain animals were highly regarded by ancient Egyptians.

Myths depict the sun - god Atum - Ra as pre - eminent in creation and allots the creation of mankind to the tears of Re's sun - eye (Bleeker 1969 : 93). Trigger (1983 : 196) and Bleeker (1969 : 55, 58) concede that creation was done by a creator-god in the cosmogony of Hermopolis — equated to Re in Thebes — who was aided in his efforts by the gods Hu and Sia. Hornung (1992 : 40, 43) suggests a juxtaposition of the Ennead with that of the cosmogony and posited that the prelude to the foundation of the primeval state is negatively portrayed by the Egyptians. It would seem that Quirke and Spencer (1992 : 66) and Trigger (1983 : 197) are in agreement with Hornung, since the aforesaid associate the events prior to creation as formative to the foundation of the primeval state and link these situations with malevolent figures such as Seth and disorder.

Croatto (1982 : 66) on the other hand, perceives the myth that evolves around the battle of the gods in which some are eliminated and one victor emerged as a propagandistic ploy of the ruling dynasty to maintain the status quo since the victorious god is considered to be the patron of the ruling dynasty. Hornung (1992 : 48) and Kemp (1989 : 47, 51) perceive those incidents as derived from an allegory to convey power and maintain that the pairs of beasts of the ogdoad represent the unity and political peace for the two kingdoms and that visual culture, such as the vignette found in the Hierakonpolis Decorated Tomb i.e. of the god Seth holding two lions apart, represent the Egyptian theology that conveys the king as the force in the balance in harmony and formed part of the manipulative state ideology.

The early Egyptian perception of creation entails an emergence from the primordial waters of the creator - god Atum — of which the Ennead of Heliopolis stems from — out of the Ogdoad (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 60). The ogdoad of Hermopolis constitutes of four pairs. The females had snake - heads and the males had frog - heads and are known as Nun and Naunet, Huh and Hauhet, Kuk and Kauket, Amon and Amaunet. The ancient Egyptians also worship the moon - god Thoth - Khonsu that had the shape of a baboon, was the son of Amun and Mut; had Seshat as consort and was considered to be the patron of writing, justice and the protector of physicians. Other fascinating gods are Geb and Nut, parents of Osiris around whom the funerary cult evolves, his wife Isis and son Horus. Another god that play a part in the funerary cult, is Anubis, who is portrayed as a recumbent dog, and supervises the embalming of the mummy. The god Ptah is connected to the establishment of the ethical and natural orders and is perceived as the patron of artisans and craftsmen. He has a wife Sekhmet and a son Nefertem. Other gods of equal importance are Min, Hathor, Bastet, Neith etc., (cf. Bleeker 1969 : 54 - 55; 61 - 72; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 61 - 65). The latter scholars suggest that in the Litany of Ra that is evident on the tomb walls at Thebes, seventy - five names are ascribed to the sun - god (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 262). Bleeker (1969 : 41) suggests that the ancient Egyptian referred to the sun - god - as Khepri, a god responsible for his personal creation and is represented by a scarab that pushes the sun - disk; - as Re in the afternoon and - Atum at dusk.

A form of systematization with regard to the manifold gods was adhered to in the New Kingdom period in which the numbers three and nine had importance. The latter is exemplified in the Ennead of Heliopolis that constitutes of Atum, the sun - god; Shu and Tefnut, gods of the atmosphere; Geb, god of the earth; Nut, goddess of the sky; Osiris, Isis, Seth and Nephthys (Bleeker 1969 : 49). Another image concentrates on a cow rising out of the primordial water and coincides with agricultural concerns such as fertility and potency and explain the importance of cattle (cf. Eliade 1959 : 142; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 61, 71).

The interaction between religion, the ecology is attested in one myth pertaining to creation which emphasizes the vitality of youth and the scent of a lotusflower that is representative of the breath of life (cf. Trigger 1983 : 255; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 60). The interaction between mythology and art is exemplified by painted or sculptured blossoms of the lotus and are depicted in tomb - chapels during the New Kingdom period (Murray 1954 : 15). Frankfort, (in Bleeker 1969: 53, 90, 104) suggests that the ancient Egyptians' worship of their multiple gods in various ways and with diverse symbols, serve as an expression of a religious truth and is ethically appropriate, since they did what they ought to do and waste not time to "speculate".

Croatto (1982 : 72) on the other hand suggests that the revival of the life cycle in the mythical world view underlines the oppression of women, since it portrays the fertile union between the god and his spouse that is re - enacted on earth between the king and his **qadistu** i.e., sacred woman. Contrary to Croatto's viewpoint, if one adheres to Meyer's and Herlihy's, (in Lesko 1987: 269, 307) theory regarding patriarchy, Hatshepsut's practical denotations to patriarchy bear no negative connotations that "devalue females", but should be seen as a form of protection of her lineage and status in Egypt's absolute. An allegorical view of Hatshepsut's divine birth that is recorded on the temple walls of Deir el - Bahri reveals a certain dualism. On the one hand Hatshepsut's conception is perceived as mythical, but on the other hand was supposed to be taken up literally by the ancient Egyptians (Bleeker 1969 : 77).

The many facets of the Egyptian homogeneous culture are inextricably linked and communal life was enshrined in myths and adherence to ritual. The ancient Egyptian believed in **heka** i.e. "magic" and that his lifeline was determined by destiny, an educator, and either a goddess of birth or the god Khnum (cf. Bleeker 94, 104; Quirke and Spencer 1992: 82). Egyptian piety and scepticism towards life found expression amongst ordinary people in their adherence to lesser gods such as Thoueris and Bes, the wisdom literature of Amenemope , pseudo - prophesies

of Neferrohu and the doctrine of Ptahotep (Bleeker 1969 : 42, 51). The ancient Egyptian had a concrete view of the afterlife where his soul, spirit and body become one. To ensure that his **k3** and **b3** ("soul" and "spirit") exist in the afterlife when he will become a transfigured being and to guarantee his partaking in the daily orbit of Re and Osiris, the ancient Egyptians adhered to a ceremony known as the Opening of the Mouth with a **peshes - kaf** i.e., a ripple chipped knife at the time of death to ensure the sustenance of the body (cf. Hornung 1992 : 66, 167; Bleeker 1969 : 50, 66, 96, 98, 106; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 65). Kristensen, (cited in Bleeker 1969: 82) argues that the ancient Egyptian's belief in the dualism of life and death and a belief in the revival of the dead sprung from an image of the sun - god's daily emergence with his sun - boat at the horizon i.e. the - **3ht** - from his **am - Duat** journey of 12 hours in the underworld. The sacred boat had a religious significance and was perceived as a representation of the godhead and had a highly revered place in temples.

Croatto (1982 : 65) suggests that the sacred is expressed in religious language through the employment of myth to ascribe meaning to present reality, as well as symbols, in order to refer to the mysterious. Kemp (1989 : 107) holds that the propangandistic state ideology evolved around a merger of history, political power and material culture in myth. The world view was promoted by myth and enhanced the political status quo that ascribed the subjugation of peoples and propagated conformity amongst the Egyptian people through collective endeavours, such as the building of palaces, sanctuaries, temples etc., to create a collective sense of security (Croatto 1982 : 69). Architecture such as the Step Pyramid served as focal points of religious worship to revive the divine royal ideology of kingship that has its foundations in the past, since the Pyramid Texts associate the Step Pyramid with the cult of the sun centered at Heliopolis (cf. Trigger 1983 : 62; Kemp 1989 : 55). The king was perceived as a divine being and was attributed all the necessary ritual and amuletic protection (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 70). The political and religious interaction is evident in the Egyptian religious perception that the Pharaoh is an earthly embodiment of the god Horus and a five - fold titulary was assigned to

the former. The Pharaoh acted as protector of the Egyptian people against "Typhonic forces". The **Weretherkau** - serpent on the brow of the king - served as protection against the forces of evil that want to destroy his **heka** i.e. the "magic" or life giving force that is within existence since creation (Trigger 1983 : 288).

The issue of kingship in the ancient Near East is debated at an abstract level using political and theological arguments. Kingship was based on a splendid theory. The king was perceived as the mediator between the people and the god Amen and the Egyptian people was personally and directly responsible to the king. The idealised idea of divine kingship was an integral part of the Egyptian world view. This legitimized the king and inspired loyalty, since it emphasized the idea that the king was the archetypal son or daughter of the god Amen. The king was also perceived as the shepherd of the people and was suppose to see to the latter's welfare (cf. Bleeker 1969 : 78, 81; Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 71; Croatto 1982 : 66). Innovations such as royal oracles to legitimize rules should be seen in immediate relationship with present political and religious reality (Kemp 1989 : 183). Processions by Hatshepsut along the Royal Road and in front of the temple of Luxor in important festivals of gods such as the Sed-, Opet-, and Valley festivals; the burial of animals and mummification enjoyed great prominence during the New Kingdom (cf. Kemp 1989 : 205 - 213; Trigger 1983 : 276).

Scholars concede that the ancient Egyptian state can be classified as "sacerdotal", since the temples functioned in a symbiotic relationship with the state. At the pinnacle of this reciprocal relationship that existed between the community, the clergy and the gods, ritually was the king who was regarded as the high priest of Amen (cf. Trigger 1983 : 201; Kemp 1989 : 190, 193). A certain dualism enshrines the ritual role of the high priest. Bleeker (1969 : 81) suggests that the pharaoh theoretically enacted high priestly duties in cultic ceremonies, but in practice was replaced by a priest, for example Hapusenb who was the High Priest of Amen and the prime minister of Hatshepsut and most probably, whose wife's ritual functions at the temple were elevated to match his own (cf. Baikie 1929 : 79; Clayton 1994 :

107; Lesko 1987 : 21).

Hatshepsut performed dual functions in the religious sphere. She practically enacted the role of “consort of god” when she played the sistrum in the temple to placate the dualistic nature of the goddess Hathor that encompassed anger that could destroy mankind, but who also epitomized fertility and was perceived as the protector of women in childbirth and music (cf. Bleeker 1969 : 80; Robins 1993 : 17, 18). The sacral role of the queen in cultic activities is exemplified by the fact that she attended the Sed festival when the Djed - pillar was erected to symbolize the idea of resurrection that was closely associated with the god Osiris. The queen was the only woman present in the procession at the festival of the procession of the god Min (cf. Bleeker 1969 : 80; Kemp 1989 : 216). When Hatshepsut became pharaoh she not only denounced the title of “Great Wife” which connected her to Thutmose II, but the title of “God’s Wife” which practically connected her to the priestly office as well (cf. Robins 1983 : 75; Samson 1985 : 83). In doing so, Hatshepsut thus adapted the ancient religious supernatural “sanctioned formal structure” to accommodate her as female pharaoh. Thus enabling her to theoretically assume kingly duties — a factor that encompasses a more intriguing sense of dualism, since it relates to the theoretical appointment of priests that in any case, practically held hereditary priestly offices (O’ Connor 1983 : 189).

The West bank of the Nile served as location for mortuary temples or tombs that were dedicated to the god Amen and were known as “House of Eternity” (cf. Baikie 1929 : 73; Cottrell 1966 : 16; Hornung 1992 : 105). Temples varied in size, from the magnificent national shrines to many smaller local ones (O’ Connor 1983 : 199).

The traditional Egyptian temple was a stone building with colonnaded galleries and forecourts. The temple was perceived as a “cosmic dwelling” of both the earthly and mythic god (Bleeker 1969 : 73). In Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el - Bahri the sanctuary of Amen - Re was in the holiest part of the temple. Hatshepsut introduced “ a note of femininity” in temple designs when she developed the idea of a

terraced temple from a shrine of Mentuhotep Neb - hapet - Ra of the eleventh Dynasty. Scholars are impressed with this magnificent piece of architecture whose main emphasis was its horizontal feature, despite the fact that the originality of the design cannot be attributed to Hatshepsut and her architect, Senemut (cf. Baikie 1929 : 67; Cottrell 1966 : 29).

The multiple Egyptian gods were separately accommodated in different temples and the perpetuation of the cult image was ensured by a staff of priests, servants, gifts and estates (O' Connor 1983 : 201). Women had a distinct cultic role and acted as professional mourners and *ka* - servants; the latter performed offerings to the gods and assumed responsibility for the upkeep of graves (Lesko 1987 : 21). The perception of an intertwined cosmos, community and individual is furthermore emphasized through cultic ritual activities, festivals and religious - political processions (cf. O' Connor 1983 : 199; Kemp 1989 : 205).

Kemp (1989 : 204 - 205, 216) suggests that the traditional river processions en route to the Sed - festival; the parading of a physical image of the god Amen in a portable barque along the processional routes marked with sphinxes etc., enabled the Amen priests to convey the divine choice of the next king. This apparent religious - political interaction is aptly exemplified in Hatshepsut's appointment as king. Noteworthy was Hatshepsut's play on her divine birth which is recorded in the horizontal registers on the walls of her temple at Deir el Bahri in correlation with the powerful support of the Amen priesthood. The appliance of these mythic acts enabled her to side - step secular social conventions that evolved around the traditional appointment of a male heir to the throne and allowed her to become pharaoh. According to the archaeological find of Howard Carter in 1916 -17, two sarcophagi were found in Hatshepsut's temple — one for herself and one for her father, Thutmose I (Cottrell 1966 : 36). It would seem that Hatshepsut pulled out all the stops to fuel ancient precepts and beliefs to explain the current policy and behavioral patterns during her period of rule (O' Connor 1983 : 189).

3. 7. Social organization and culture

The interaction of archaeological evidence and written sources enables one to construe the social customs of an Egyptian community of the past, which altered under foreign rule due to an amalgamation with Greek and Macedonian traditions that coincided with conversions from paganism first to Christianity and to Islam (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 22, 52). Trigger (1983 : 197, 327 - 347) maintains that the unique character of Egyptian civilization was shaped by its technology and governmental institutions. The latter reverted to coercive measures and employed an ideology based on tradition which encompassed a particular world view to ensure orderliness in society. The Egyptian world view embodied the idea that a creator god was responsible for creation of the universe and the pantheon of gods which is counterbalanced by creation of the earth and the foundations of social life and the technical organization it embodies. However, true to Robins' (1989 : 116) suggestion, "little in ancient Egypt can be taken at face value".

Bardis' (1988 : 39) suggestion that a perennial discrepancy between family ideals and actual family life exists, coincides with that of Robins (1989 : 116) when the latter holds that artistic and literary evidence of ancient Egypt require a reassessment, since it represents the idealized traditional values and practices encompassed in an "official view" which was propagated by a scribal elite. Lesko (1987 : 15) suggests that despite the prevalence of a principle of equity before the law for men and women for the best part of antiquity in Egypt, the administering of law and justice was characterized by inconsistency, particularly with regard to civil rights. An evaluation of the social environment of the different sexes and classes will assert the persistence of a practice of double standards and sexual discrimination in ancient Egypt.

A latitude towards men in Egypt, probably due to the emphasis placed on prolific reproduction and the indulgence of the law with regard to temporary marriages, is epitomized by the imbalance in punishment that is administered to men and women

who are guilty of the same sexual offence — a practice which suggests sexual discrimination (cf. Robins 1989 : 251; Bardis 1988 : 34, 41). Contrary to what Lesko (1987 : 24) advocates, the unfair judicial system is exemplified by the fact that the law permits the physical defacement and subsequent psychological suffering of an adulteress which culminates in the securing of a divorce by her husband. This harsh practice is sharply contrasted by the sentence of 1000 blows dealt to her lover in the sense that the blows could eventually heal and fade or kill the adulterer whereas the same cannot be said of the punishment that the women had received (Bardis 1988 :47).

Throughout the centuries in ancient Egypt male favouritism perpetuates and is attested to in the case of divorce secured by the husband, when the latter was expected to compensate his wife by returning her dowry — often consisting of 50 measures of corn and six ounces of silver — and a partial transference of their joint marital property. When the wife, on the other hand initiated the divorce, she could only lay claim to half of the dowry (Bardis 1988: 40,47). In the light of men enjoying much more freedom, it would appear that contrary to the advice of the Egyptian moralist, Ani, the rights and responsibilities of women in the political, economic and religious spheres were affected by sexual differentiation and discrimination in the labour market (cf. Robins in Lesko 1989 : 251; Bardis 1988 : 42). Lesko (1987 : 17) emphasizes Robins' perception on the latter when she maintains that women as a rule did not occupy civil service positions or held public office.

The Egyptian society is characterized by a distinction between free men, serfs and slaves. The latter was treated as a piece of merchandise which could be bought and sold (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 26; Trigger 1983 : 255, 315). Free men were the administrative officials, priests, warriors and commoners local worthies, tribunals or commissions tried who legal cases and handled administrative duties. The social, political and religious interaction is exemplified by the fact that a plaintiff could take a case before an oracle and that access to local government for arbitration existed (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 25 -26). Egypt can be perceived as

a police state, since everything and everyone was made to conform physically and psychologically. Punishment for crime depended on the severity of the act and could take the form of enslavement, beatings or the death penalty (Trigger 1983 : 249). The coercive measures of the state is exemplified by the fact that Thutmose III enforced the subservience of foreign princes by keeping their children in Egypt — a factor which serves to emphasize Egypt's ruthless expansionist policy (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 25). Conscript freeman, prisoners or slaves were forced to work the land annually (James 1984 : 118).

The Egyptian society was stratified, but the social stratification was not extended to a segregation of living areas, since rich and poor all lived within close proximity of the Nile. The latter is exemplified by "The town roll of Thebus" which relates a lack in zoning either by trade or wealth. Government adhered to the grid - planning of towns during the Middle Kingdom, but during the New Kingdom total planning was abandoned. Temples, palaces or administrative centres served as a nodal point in towns with the mud - brick houses of the populace built in the vicinity. Large settlements were first surrounded by fortifications which triggered off the snowball effect of a concentration of people living in urban or semi - urban context. This eventually caused the fragmentation of fortified cities into towns, such as Ramesses III's funerary temple - "town" that is recorded on Piankhy's stele. Towns had cemeteries and harbours, since riverine transport was the standard means of communication. The social, political and economic interaction is evident in the fact that officials maintained fleets of Nile boats and the harbours were the venues for local markets where the exchange of goods was done on the barter system before the coinage system was introduced (cf. James 1984: 249; Trigger 1983: 241 - 325).

A subtle social stratification is discernible amongst the commoners who had diverse occupations. The latter is exemplified by the craftsmen hierarchy where jewelled goldsmiths occupied the top, metal - vessel craftsmen the middle and tinkers the bottom of the social scale (James 1984 : 189). This phenomena gave rise to the emergence of a middle class that constituted of lesser bureaucrats, priests,

artisans, traders etc., who linked the elite and lower classes. Besides their involvement in agricultural and building endeavours, commoners such as the workforce of craftsmen at Deir el - Medina who worked at the Valley of Kings, replenished their income by offering a donkey - rental service to wealthy clients. From the latter one deduces that the dynastic wealth of the Eighteenth Dynasty was never spiralled down to lift the burden of commoners who were poverty stricken and burdened by taxes (Trigger 1983 : 192 ,196).

A general view of life in an Egyptian home manifests an interaction of political, domestic economic and religious factors. All the social classes supported the religious system which was intertwined with the government system that was based on the concept of maat which included religious and secular ideas (Trigger 1983: 196). Egyptian homes had private reception and production rooms that were adorned with wooden furniture that was decorated with religious motifs and was included in funerary practices. Paintings and pictures that appear on tomb and temple walls depict daily life on the estates from a male perspective (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 22-24). Robins, (in Lesko 1989 : 115) is highly critical of the images of women that are conveyed by the art of the New Kingdom since it invariably reflect an idealized view of women and conveyed the hidden meaning of subservience. She maintains that the few women appearing in tomb scenes of "everyday life" pictured an idealized view of life on the great estates that divert from the reality of poor women that might have helped their men more actively in the fields that what is believed possible. Robins' view alludes to the idea that women might have used sickles in the field to assist their husbands and certainly not with the purpose to defy religious or social custom.

Robins, (in Lesko 1989 : 112) suggests that the written and pictorial sources convey idealized versions of the labour division and labour areas that divert from reality, since two - dimensional art is employed, especially in scenes depicting women participating in harvest. Most scholars concede that women did not partake

in the reaping of the harvest since it involved the wielding of blades. It is suggested that refrainment from such an activity was to perpetuate male dominance, since the blade was perceived as a weapon and was employed as a metaphor for masculine sexuality (Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 22). Labour differentiation negatively affected the concept of "equal work equal pay" that Egyptians superficially adhered to. Being primarily excluded from state office and certain labour areas, effectively excluded women from considerable resources and marginalized them to a secondary economic position that enhanced male dominance. The religious and political interaction is exemplified in the propagandistic royal ideology that furthermore enhanced male dominance, since it propagated the intertwining of the earthly kingship and the celestial male sun-god, resulting in occurrences where queens such as Hatshepsut, wore the male regalia of a king and claimed to be king and not queen (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992: 22; Clayton 1994 : 105). Tyldesley (1994 : 212) links the reversal in the dress pattern of Hatshepsut to the prescribed norm in Egyptian society which perceived kingship as a male prerogative and a queen regnant as a deviation from the proper role of women and the prevailing norm.

Women enjoyed authoritative positions in areas that could not affect male dominance or damaged the ideal perception of women ingrained in the "official view" (Lesko 1987 : 15). Lesko (1987: 16) maintains that women held supervisory posts in the textile industry and the perfume manufactories that were closely associated with the Great Royal Wife's estates near the Fayum lake. Women partake in the grinding of grain for flour, the making of beer, the weaving of textiles, the dancing and musical accompaniment at temple rituals, but men were in power in the administration and temple hierarchy and kingship was predominantly male (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 22-24; Trigger 1983 : 311-312). In cases where women had ventured into male occupations, the hereditary principle played a determinative role. The latter is exemplified by Lesko's theory (1987 : 17) when she posited that documents of the Middle Kingdom mention the title "scribes" and concludes that the scribal elite adhered to the hereditary principle for generations.

Ward, (in Lesko 1989 : 35-36) maintains that some women were educated, since the Middle Kingdom sources mention four female scribes, amongst whom we find the owner of a fine rock crystal scarab, and suggests that one can assume that others existed which the reliefs and paintings do not depict. If one couples the hereditary principle to sexual differentiation of work areas, it is probable that other competent women with aspirations for similar occupations were excluded from the latter, though some of them could probably read or write in the New Kingdom period (Lesko 1989: 17).

Contrary to what is being advocated in Maine's Patriarchal Theory, private property and mother right existed in ancient Egypt. Though the ancient Egyptian society was patriarchal, it did not adhere to the primogeniture principle which meant that the oldest son inherits his father's property and status, since inheritance was passed down matrilineal (Bardis 1988 : 7,17,43). The social and political interaction is exemplified in the hereditary principle which was a pivotal factor in the institutional structure that comprised of the upper strata of Egyptian society that was formed by the royal dynasty and high ranking officials. The king had a paramount position in the social hierarchy and the cult, defence and administration evolved around his person. He appointed all government positions, but at times of weak central government, the appointment of the High Priest was based on the hereditary principle.

The fluidity of ancient Egyptian society is exemplified by the dual economic and political occupations people had, such as Penehasy, a commoner who was overseer of granaries as well as an army leader and Viceroy of Kush — which sheds light on the hereditary of land that was possible, since a government official may own property inherited from his parents as well as land granted to him by virtue of his position in government. Besides the elite who owned vast estates according to the Wilbour Papyrus, the warrior class who were Libyan foreigners and mainly settled in the Delta, can also be considered as belonging to the land exploiting groups. During the New Kingdom the principle of landrights was

democratized and commoners could buy, sell and inherit land as well as own slaves (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 25, 54; Trigger 1983 : 192, 196, 201 - 202, 227; Lesko 1987 : 22).

Marriage in ancient Egypt whether monogamous, consanguineous or polygamous were patrilocal and embodied the inheritance principle. Marriage was perceived as a social contract and had no religious value before the Ptolemaic Period : 303 - 30 B.C. (cf. Lesko 1987 : 24; Bardis 1988 : 39). Marriage in the dynastic circles were polygamous — Thutmose II married his half-sister, Hatshepsut, who became his principal wife, but also had a secondary wife, Isis, who was the mother of Thutmose III — and marriage amongst commoners was mainly monogamous (cf. Grimal 1992 : 207; Lesko 1987 : 24). Tyldesley (1994 : 211) suggests that the incentive to polygamous royal marriages encompassed the idea that the king should be provided with the maximum opportunity to father a male heir. Bardis (1988 : 42) maintains that women in ancient Egypt were highly respected which is exemplified in the equation of their importance to goddesses such as Isis, Hathor etc., and probably also because their husbands were usually their brothers. In assessing different social conditions for different classes, it would appear that mostly women from the lower strata were treated with disrespect. If one takes in account that “gross immorality” was common practice among the working class and that men “frequently lived with women and that assault was carried out on strange women”, the “high ethical” of ancient Egypt and Ramses III’s assumption in the Domesday Book that lone women could travel the roads unhindered, is questionable, since it would appear that reality proved quite the opposite (Bardis 1988: 43, 47).

It would appear that the different classes adhered to different rules with regard to choice of residence at the onset of marital life. Bardis (1988: 24) suggests that young couples left the parental home and established their own households. The wife enjoyed financial security through legal settlements such as the *5 nh* that ascribes an annual cash maintenance or monthly allowance to the wife. Contrary to the aforesaid, the dynastic couples lived apart, each with an independent

household (Lesko 1989 : 44). Lesko (1987 : 3) holds that the Great Royal Wife had a matrilocal residence and lived apart from the harem and the Pharaoh. Baikie (1929 : 47) perceives Thutmose II, Hatshepsut's husband as a weakling and in the light of such an assumption it seems apt to apply Winch's theory of complimentary needs to their marriage. According to this theory, this type of marriage might be perceived as a Thurberian marriage in which the husband is submissive and the wife dominant. Most scholars concede that Hatshepsut was a strongwilled woman and was the dominant partner that ruled in the reign of Thutmose II and the initial nominal reign of Thutmose III; one who did not wait for money to be allotted to her — what probably had been the case when she was consort queen, — but directly controlled the Treasury etc. as Pharaoh (cf. Trigger 1983: 214; Tyldesley 1994: 213).

Bardis (1988 : 40) suggests that harems were administered by a hierarchy of the officialdom and was supported by special taxes. Ward, (in Lesko 1989: 41) however, negates the existence of a royal harem per se prior to the New Kingdom period and argues that according to lexical evidence, the term 'ip. t -nsw. - t encompassed different interpretations other than "royal harem" that is imbedded in the traditional view. He maintains that the archaeological finds of women who presumably belonged to harems prior to the Empire, is based on assumptions none other than the fact that the site represents a group burial area in the vicinity of the king. Lesko (1989 : 44) however, refutes the new meanings being given to old words and insists a harem for women existed and that a concubine who had residence in a harem was the mother of Thutmose III who was in co - regency with Hatshepsut.

The social and religious interaction is evident in the fact that despite the prevalence of male dominance in Egyptian society, it would seem that equality ascribed to mythic origins, prevailed when it came to rearing of children. All children were perceived as a gift of gods. Although great emphasis was placed on the begetting of at least one male heir, children were loved equally and undue preference of boys

to girls were non - existent (cf. Cottrell 1966 : 83; Tyldesley 1994 : 211; Lesko 1987: 30). Art scenes attest the latter in its idealistic depiction of a family which usually included a portrayal of parents in the company of a daughter. Gardiner holds that the love of Egyptian fathers for their daughters is exemplified by the names given to the latter, such as "Beauty Comes" etc., when translated (cf. Bardis 1988 : 43; Cottrell 1966 : 83).

Not only did sons and daughters share inheritance, but legitimate and illegitimate children enjoyed equal legal rights (cf. Lesko 1987 : 22; Bardis 1988 : 4). The aforesaid is exemplified in the case of Thutmose III, son of Isis, Thutmose III's concubine, who along with Hatshepsut enjoyed an equal right to the throne after the death of Thutmose II (Grimal 1992 : 207). The protection of children is furthermore exemplified by the fact that administrators of the law engaged in psychological warfare against parents who murdered their children by subjecting the guilty party to a physical embracement of the dead child for three days (Bardis 1988 : 41). The latter attests to the prevalence of coercive psychological trends in the political ideology that serve as measures to punish or conform society in an attempt to enhance the hegemonic idea which suggests that the issues of life and death are in the hands of the pharaoh and the officialdom.

A lively scholarly debate has emerged with regard to the legal equality, and more particularly, the landrights of women in the ancient Egyptian society. Cruz - Uribe, in Lesko (1989: 137-138) argues that despite women's legal equality to men, surviving evidence suggest that women might not have been able to exercise those rights. However, not only does Allen, (in Lesko 1989: 136) holds that women's legal possession of immovables were acknowledged and is attested to in the cadaster -survey of the Wilbour Papyrus which relates that women comprised 8% of the landholders, but Grosz and Fisher, (in Lesko 1989: 138 - 139) argue that in addition to the latter, women could bequeath her property to any heir. Robins, (in Lesko 1989 : 113) elaborates on the legal equality of women when she holds that women could represent themselves in court. It is noteworthy that Cottrell (1966 :

82) holds that no sexual segregation existed in Egyptian social life, whereas the facts prove that sexual segregation was evident in work differentiation in certain labour areas (cf. Quirke and Spencer 1992 : 22-24; Trigger 1983 : 311 -312). The world view encompasses the concept of creation and its connotation of sexual regeneration — a concept which Bardis (1988 : 41) seems to reiterate when he posited that the ancient Egyptians placed great emphasis on prolific reproduction. He furthermore suggests that according to the Berlin Papyrus of 1300 B.C. fertility tests were popular and women often wear amulets in the form of a frog to promote fertility. Robins (1993 : 19) emphasizes this perception when she posited that the only common denominator between the female population of the different classes was their childbearing ability.

With regard to Hatshepsut's childbearing days, scholars are not in agreement as to how many children Hatshepsut had. Some argue that she had one child whereas other suggest that she had two (cf. Hayes 1978 : 106; Tyldesley 1994 : 222). The possibility of using a form of birth control in Hatshepsut's case seems tenable, if one takes in account that it has been suggested by some scholars that Hatshepsut had one or two children in the four or fourteen regnal years of Thutmose II and probably had after Thutmose II's death an intimate relationship with Senemut, a bachelor of unknown birth, but with an unrivalled position in the administration of the land (cf. Clayton 1994 : 104; Tyldesley 1994 : 226; Grimal 1992 : 207; Trigger 1983 : 224). A common form of contraception in ancient Egypt was ovariectomy. According to the Petrie Papyrus or Kahun Papyrus (1800B.C.) the mobility of sperm in the engagement of sexual activity was countered by the application of a mixture of honey and natron to the four labia and vagina (Bardis 1988: 46).

Tyldesley (1994 : 26) suggests that childhood was a short - lived experience when children could play with delightful mechanical toys (cf. Bardis 1988 : 42). Bardis (1988 : 40) echoes this thought when he holds that child marriages — as young as eleven — combined within youthful pregnancies caused the death of several women. The latter is attested to by the body of Mutnodjmet, wife of king Horemheb

that was recovered with the body of a foetus or new born child (cf. Tyldesley 1994 : 24), Depending on the status of children i.e. whether they were royal or non - royal children and the children of either free men or slaves, young girls were trained in the many varied domestic arts and boys were sent to school where they received tutelage in their trade (cf. Lesko 1987 : 18; Tyldesley 1994 : 26). During certain periods daughters were bound by law to care for her parents, whereas it was expected of sons to maintain his father's tomb and erect statues to perpetuate the latter's memory (Bardis 1988 :42).

The differentiation of work is exemplified by the unequal designation of tasks for daughters and sons, and epitomizes the subtle sexual inequality between men and women. The question that arises concerns the degree of responsibility towards their parents that each of the sexes had to shoulder. According to Lesko (1987 : 30), and Bardis (1988: 42) the son was responsible for the burial of a parent and the maintenance of mortuary services. The physical duty attached to the latter was easily transferred to women who acted as arrangers of funerals or as **ka** - servants and performed mortuary services in tombs (Lesko 1987 : 20). Contrary to the latter, women could in no way shirk the responsibility of caring for their parents and this responsibility only comes to an end when the parents died.

Chapter 4 Nefertiti

4.1. Introduction

To determine how and why Nefertiti enjoyed pharaonic prominence, one needs to assess the political, economic, religious and social circumstances that were prevalent in ancient Egypt during Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's reign. An adherence to a cultural anthropological approach which encompass the interrelated aforesaid aspects as well as other cultural aspects on a lesser scale, might yield answers to the question raised at the onset of this essay.

Hayes and Holladay (1982: 9, 10) attribute the existence of a cultural and historical gap between the reader or interpreter and the time when data of a remote and different culture was primarily produced, to an existing chronological separation. Most scholars, however, in their endeavour to translate and interpret ancient data strive, bridge the gap and attempt to convey all aspects of Egyptian cultural life in the context of its own setting and basic assumption (cf. Säve - Söderbergh 1963 : 9).

In the discourse of critical moments that have changed history in the ancient, Mann, (in Samson 1985 : xi) is well aware of elusory factors that hamper the piecing together of an ancient history. Smith and Redford (1976 : xiii, xiv) elaborate more extensively on the elusory factor in a given period of ancient history. The latter conceive the reconstruction of the course of events of Akhenaten's reign, generally noted as a revolutionary period in the thought and history of the Eighteenth Dynasty, as only vaguely discernible in its effect on the Egyptian body politic. They furthermore argue that in the absence of published statements, no real light can be shed on what appropriated policy and triggered the motivation for decisive steps taken by Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Samson (1985: xi, xiii) endorses the former view when she typifies the surviving material as formulaic that yields scant "historical" or "biographical" information. She maintains, however, that though impressive

personages of the past such as the female sovereign Nefertiti, consort of the sun - worshipping Akhenaten (1367 - 1350 B.C.), are removed from one in time and culture, she, at a crucial time in history, belonged to a world that encompassed a civilized society.

4.2. Politics

In the light of scant existing evidence with regard to the role and status of Nefertiti, due to the fact that archival sources such as the find in situ of the "Record Office" at Amarna scarcely shed light on Nefertiti, speculative ideas emerge as scholars rely upon inferences from inscriptional and artifactual evidence from temples in Egypt and Nubia that survived through the ages (Samson 1985: xiii). Smith and Redford (1976: 82) suggest that Nefertiti is not mentioned in the Amarna letters, but Weigall (1923: 187) advocate the contrary. The latter scholar holds that the little information yielded by the Amarna Letters with regard to Nefertiti rather portrays the latter in a negative light. The latter factor is exemplified in a searing letter from Burrabarriash, King of Babylon, in which he voices his dissatisfaction with Nefertiti's lack of enquirement with regard to his health — a factor that would have conformed to diplomatic protocol, since Burrabarriash's son was married by proxy to Akhenaten's daughter who most probably could have been Nefer - nefru - Aton (Weigall 1923: 187, 195).

A synopsis of the political situation during the inseparable theopolitical reign of Akhenaten and the female sovereign Nefertiti, suggests an intertwinement of political, economic, religious and social aspects and assesses a certain degree of despotism, threatened traditions, changing institutions, unsurpassed wealth and abundant manpower (cf. Bleeker and Widengren 1969: 78; Smith and Redford 1976: xiii; Assmann 1989: 56). It is furthermore suggested that due to the unpopular radical changes enforced by Akhenaten into the Egyptian culture — namely the abandonment of the traditional world view in preference to a "fundamental nature of reality" — that the aftermath of the royal couple's death was not only characterized by the dismantling of monuments and the obliteration of their

names from official records. Subsequently a derailment of sun - worship was caused that culminated in its banning as state cult and the abandonment of Akhetaten by their former subjects and the latter's return to Thebes. (cf. Sampson 1985: xii; Allen 1989: 94, 99; Smith and Redford 1976: xiv).

4.3. Historical background

Five generations later after Hatshepsut, in the latter part of the period in which the Eighteenth Dynasty assumed rule after the expulsion of the Hyksos and "the re-establishment of **maat**", Egypt was at the height of its power during the rule of Akhenaten and Nefertiti in 1360 B.C. (cf. Samson 1985: 2; Stewart 1971: 62). The Egyptian empire controlled Mitanni and its northern vassals, the upper Orontes basin, the fertile farmlands of the Amki, the grazing country of Damascus, Canaan and Palestine — "the habitable world was at Egypt's feet" (Redford 1993: 166-169). The political and economic interaction is exemplified in the fact that Akhenaten at Amarna shrewdly usurped the international riverine transport and the trade in a wealth of commodities such as copper and opium from Cyprus, timber from Lebanon, moringa oil from the north and gold from the south (cf. Redford 1993: 212; Stewart 1971: 62). In displaying such action it would seem that at this particular stage Akhenaten showed no sign of the mental illness that some scholars posited (cf. Samson 1985: 10; Cottrell 1966: 148). Trade and Syrian tribute ensured the initial welfare of the royal couple and a flourishing of the art, but also marked a decline in wealth at Thebes and an internal five dimensional conflict of cosmic, religious, political, social and anthropological dimensions (cf. Assmann 1989: 56 Stewart 1971: 63, 64; Weigall 1923: 225). Smith and Redford (1976: 123) suggest that the decline of Thebes was enhanced by the fact that Akhetaten formed the royal and court necropolis and had usurped Memphis' role as the site of the **sed** - festival.

A certain duality emerge in Smith and Redford's (1976: 80) argument with regard to the date of Akhenaten's marriage to Nefertiti, as they speculate that the marriage

could have taken place in the first few months of Akhenaten's reign if one sets the **terminus ad quem** for the appearance on the Karnak **talatat** of Nefertiti's second daughter in the fourth year and allows for an age gap of four years between the eldest and second eldest daughter. They also speculate that Akhenaten could have married Nefertiti late in his father's reign at a time when it became evident that his father, Amenophis III was close to death and a dire need for a successor emerged. The latter factor would to an extent correlate with White's suggestion (1970: 171) that Nefertiti was the Mitannian princess, Tadukhipa, sister of the Mitannian king, Tushratta, who was sent to marry Amenophis III for political reasons, but in the event of the latter's death, was wedded to his son, Amenophis IV who eventually changed his name to Akhenaten.

Nefertiti's name which means "A Beautiful Woman has Come" and is in some cases preceded by the epithet Nefernefruaton which means "Beautiful are the Beauties of the Aton", has triggered off a lively debate with regard to her origin. The scholarly debate on Nefertiti's origin intensifies as Weigall (1923: 44, 47) and Baikie (1929: 189) posited that an assumption of Nefertiti's foreign origin is not supported by any real evidence and hold that Nefertiti's Egyptian origin is emphasized in the archaeological find of a portrait which reflects her Egyptian features. The latter factor is once again questioned by Madame Desroches - Noblecourt, (in Cottrell 1966: 102) on the basis that Nefertiti's bust sculpture reflects a rosy skin colour that alludes to a non - Egyptian origin. She leaves the question of Nefertiti's parentage an open issue.

Hayes (1978: 281) is in agreement with the view that supports Nefertiti's Egyptian origin and suggest that Nefertiti was the daughter of the Cavalry Commander, Ay, and Ty, who was her stepmother, since she refers to her as "great nurse and nourisher". Smith and Redford (1976: 79) on the other hand, maintain that the stepmother issue is not a certain fact, but offer no evidence to substantiate their theory. Samson (1985: 10) and Weigall (1923: 94) concede that Nefertiti had sisters at court. Weigall (1923: 188) posited that Nefertiti's sister, Nezemmut

married an Egyptian nobleman and Watterson (1991: 154) holds that king Horemheb married Mutnodjmet who probably was a sister of Nefertiti. Hayes (1978: 281) holds that Nefertiti's father, Ay, was the brother of Queen Tiy and maintain that their parents were Yuyu and Tuya; a factor which suggests that Nefertiti was a commoner who through her marriage into the dynastic family not only enabled her to become queen, but also to be honoured like a king. The latter factor is exemplified by the fact that Nefertiti's name is written in 360 examples of her cartouche of which 221 employed the short form and 139 the long on the Karnak **talatat** (Smith and Redford 1976: 80).

Scholars generally agree that Nefertiti had six daughters and that the birth of the first, Meryet-Aton also signifies Nefertiti's elevated position to Regnant Queen. This idea is exemplified by the many scenes on the temple walls and scenes in tombs which portray Nefertiti in a kingly fashion, making offerings that deviates from normal practice with regard to the role of a queen and also contrasts with her former position in the early years of her marriage when she apparently was still childless. A scene in the tomb of the Vizier Ramose portrays the early years of Akhenaten and Nefertiti's marriage. In her apparently first "window appearance" Nefertiti is portrayed in a somewhat subordinate position as she is seen standing partly behind her husband (cf. Watterson 1991: 154; Samson 1985: 13). Smith and Redford (1976: 78, 132) suggest that in plate 23:4 Nefertiti is shown standing probably to the right of the king, and not to the left which was the customary poise; this convey the equality of power between the king and Nefertiti who had the title of "mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt" (cf. Lesko 1987: 8). Smith and Redford (1976: 125) maintain that the "window appearance" of the royal couple was closely linked to propagandist purposes aimed at political and economic gain, since material rewards were publicly given to officials for "services" rendered to which foreign diplomats, visiting princes etc. were invited to attend the ceremonies in order to realize that the pharaoh rewarded loyalty.

It would seem that three of Nefertiti's six daughters had entered into royal marriages. Hayes (1978: 297-298) suggests that Nefertiti's eldest daughter, Meryet - Aton married Smenkhare, Akhenaten's immediate successor. Lesko (1987: 8) suggests that some scholars advocate that Nefertiti and Smenkhare was the selfsame person who ruled briefly after Akhenaten's death (cf. Tyldesley 1994: 214). Samson (1985: 87, 96) propagates the same view and holds that with the exception of Nefertiti, the names of Smenkhare, Akhenaten and Meryet - Aton appear on the gateway of Nefertiti's northern palace. She argues that in the light of the find of clay wine - jar sealings with Nefertiti's name and the fact that Nefertiti would not have omitted her name from her own gateway, that Smenkhare and Nefertiti had the same identity, that of Ankhkeprure - Smenkhare. She maintains that Akhenaten's co - regency with a woman is exemplified in the Petrie - find of a broken stone stela which relates Akhenaten's two names and those of Ankhkeprure and Nefernefruaton along with Nefertiti's title of "Beloved". In contrast to this view other scholars suggest that Smenkhare, half brother of Akhenaten, lived with Nefertiti in her northern palace at Akhetaten (Säve - Söderbergh 1963: 83; Stewart 1971: 68).

Another daughter of Nefertiti, Ankhespaton married Tutankhamon, Smenkhare's successor. Weigall (1923: 187) advocates that yet another daughter, Nefernefru - Aton was married by proxy to a Babylonian prince. The latter action signifies foreign political interaction which qualifies the degree of Egyptian policy of creating buffer zones through diplomatic marriages. It also reflects the internal economic and political interaction, since it sheds light on international correspondence of diplomatic variety on small clay tablets and the use of Akkadian cuneiform as lingua franca that needed to be translated into Egyptian by scribes who enjoyed pharaonic employment (cf. Samson 1985: 29; Redford 1993: 141, 230).

4.4. Nefertiti's kingly role

Iconographic evidence suggests that Nefertiti enjoyed unsurpassed prominence as

Queen Regnant during Akhenaten's rule (Lesko 1987: 8). Tyldesley (1994: 235) suggests that Nefertiti can be perceived as a co-regent of her husband, though no written evidence attest to the latter. The political and religious interaction is particularly evident in Nefertiti's kingly role which is exemplified by her colossal statues in the city architecture and the remarkable scenes on pillars, temple walls and temple pylons where she is portrayed worshipping the Aton in a kingly style (Samson 1985: 17). Scholars hold that the numerical imbalance evident in 564 occurrences of Nefertiti's figure, crown or cartouches of which only 14 percent relates the king by name or figure, heralds Nefertiti's important role in the cult and reflects a degree of power and influence which is paralleled by the Eighteenth Dynasty's line of matriarchal queens (cf. Smith and Redford 1976 : 80, 82; Tyldesley 1994: 235). Unparalleled by the former queens, is the note of feminism that Nefertiti introduced in the court with her wearing of the kingly uraei and coiffures such as the disc with horns topped by feathers, the Nubian wig, a curled wig etc., which inaugurated titles such as: "with beautiful face, fair in the two feathers" (Smith and Redford 1976: 81 - 82).

Nefertiti's regality and a sense of equality in status between Akhenaten and his queen is perpetuated in vignettes that depict Nefertiti as a pharaoh and the fact that — contrary to Egyptian custom, Nefertiti is standing to the right of Akhenaten, wearing the "true" blue Khepresh or war pharaoh crown mounted with the entwined royal cobras (cf. Lesko 1987: 8; Samson 1985: 16). Samson (1985: 24) holds that Nefertiti's pharaonic role is epitomized during Akhenaten's Heb Sed or "Jubilee Festival" in which Nefertiti, ostentatiously bedecked with symbols of royal power, enjoyed extraordinary prominence in this procession, when measured against the role of former queens with regard to this festival. Noteworthy in this procession is the sense of gender equity in the art scene, evident in the carving of lions and sphinxes on Akhenaten's carriage which is counterbalanced by lionesses and sphinxes moulded to Nefertiti's image on her carriage (cf. Smith and Redford 1976: 82).

Nefertiti is perceived by Samson (1985 : 87) as one who enjoyed a co - regency with Akhenaten. She derives this factor from ostraca found by Petrie, (in Samson 1985: 87) bearing the names of "Beloved" and "Nefernefruaton," both names assigned to Nefertiti. Nefertiti's elevated regal and religious position is determinatively manifested in the finding of a gold scarab (KW 772) in 1986 at Ulu Burun, inscribed with the name of "Nefernefruaton Nefertiti" i.e., **nfr - nfrw - 'itn nfrt - 'i'it'i** with a distinct reversal in the **'itn** that results in the seated queen facing the name of the god (Weinstein 1989: 17 - 19). Weinstein (1989: 25) suggests that the finding of this artifact points to Egyptian - Aegean relations in the period after Akhenaten's death and the beginning years of the Ramesside period.

In contrast to Nefertiti's usual feminine portrayal, two particular scenes at Thebes depict Nefertiti in the masculine role of trampling the enemy as a sphinx or fighting the enemy as a smiting king. At Amarna, however, where art scenes exclaim Nefertiti's femininity, the former scenes are not present (Smith and Redford 1976: 131). These Thebes scenes need to be interpreted as not dealing with reality and should be perceived as a symbolic scene of her kingship which conformed to the prevalent religious requirements and social trends of that time (cf. Robins 1993: 13; Samson 1985: 25; Baines 1995:3). Weigall (1923: 202) and Säve-Söderbergh (1963 : 80) assign prominence to the religious and political interaction of that time when they suggest that Akhenaten's belief in the Aton inaugurated a passivity towards war that caused the onset of the disintegration of the Egyptian empire and caused a state of near famine in the Nile valley (cf. White 1970: 173). White's suggestion (1970: 171) that Nefertiti was a fanatical supporter of the Aton - worship and its theology, makes it highly unlikely that Nefertiti would have actively participated in military activities (cf. Cottrell 1966: 103).

The "statue policy" that was vigorously pursued by Amenophis III, attained new dimensions in Akhenaten's reign with the introduction of a form of new naturalism which, under the auspices of Bek, Chief Sculptor and Master of Works, was

executed to ensure that Nefertiti enjoyed unusual prominence in the official art (cf. Weigall 1923: 66; Hayes 1978: 282; Säve - Söderbergh 1963: 72). The interaction of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology yield information with regard to the political and religious interaction that ascribes to Nefertiti's position of power at Thebes which is attested in twenty - six **talatat** of the Luxor and Karnak walls that are twenty - six centimetres thick (Smith and Redford 1976:1, 56 - 57). The latter scholars furthermore hold that Nefertiti's regal and religious stature is exemplified in two inscriptions on **talatat** (pls. 23: 5; 84: 4) which carry the name **Hwt - bnbn** and not only shows Nefertiti in an offering pose normally associated with a pharaoh, but also emphasizes the idea that Nefertiti had a temple of her own. The archaeological find of the Nefertiti Pillar Courtyard and pylons with Nefertiti figures alludes to the existence of an Aton temple and emphasizes the perpetual theme of femininity apparent in Akhenaten's reign (Smith and Redford 1976: 27, 46, 56).

Significant is the independence factor imbedded in a concept of equality that is conveyed in Nefertiti's royal personage and conduct and is attested in scenes of the worship of the Aton at Thebes that aimed at stressing Nefertiti's independence. The latter culminated in Amarna with scenes that herald an equal royal partnership, attested by Nefertiti and Akhenaten upholding the **Sekhem** sceptre - symbol of royal authority (Samson 1985: 60). Nefertiti's independence and strength of character is furthermore emphasized in her movement away from the "otherness of the other" royal queens and their traditional role when she firstly left Thebes for the unknown to become her home and secondly, drove her own chariot in kingly fashion along the Sikkit es - Sultan (Royal Way) with skilled horsemanship in Akhetaten which became her home (cf. Tyldesley 1994: 29; Samson 1985: 65; Cottrell 1966: 111). A certain duality emerges in Samson's theory with regard to the interpretation of symbolic scenes. On the one hand Samson (1985: 65) suggests that the obvious skill that Nefertiti displays — in one scene she is depicted deftly holding the reins in the right hand — might be attributed to the fact that her father, Ay, was the "Overseer of the King's Horses" and most probably taught Nefertiti to ride, but on the other hand Samson (1985: 25) posited that such

scenes conformed to the religious and social trends prevalent at that time and served propagandistic purposes.

The political, social and economic interaction emerges as Bleeker and Widengren (1969: 80) posited that Nefertiti had a limited fortune of her own and a staff of servants — a factor that not only signifies Nefertiti's economic independence, but also alludes to the idea that separate living arrangements for the king and queen existed (Cottrell 1966: 82). The fact that Nefertiti lived in a northern palace at Amarna in the later years of Akhenaten's reign emphasizes the idea of separate households and suggests an estrangement of the royal couple, which scholars such as Säve-Söderbergh (1963: 82) and White (1970: 172) attribute to a religious - political rupture between the two. The aforesaid also reinforces the perception of Nefertiti's legal independence, since Smith and Redford (1976: 93) suggest that according to the Amarna dockets, Nefertiti, as king's wife, was in possession of an estate between the tenth and eleventh year and between the fourteenth and seventeenth year of Akhenaten's reign.

4.5. Government and economy

Trigger (1983: 207) posited the persistence of an unaltered governmental structure throughout the entire New Kingdom, with the king and a small group of powerful officials maintaining centralized control. Cottrell (1966: 98) holds that according to hieroglyphic inscriptions, Akhenaten and Nefertiti left Thebes on the 13th day of the 8th month in Year 6 to demarcate the extent of the capital city, Akhetaten, which was bordered by fourteen stelae along both banks of the Nile (cf. Hornung 1992: 75). Most scholars concede that Akhenaten left Thebes, because the religious coexistence of the Aton and Amen cult at Karnak became unbearable (Clayton 1994: 122; Hayes 1978 : 280). Others attribute his leaving to a conflict between himself, the civil bureaucracy and the Amen priesthood which was aggravated by his insistence on royal absolutism (Knapp 1988: 219; Trigger 1983: 220). Weigall (1923: 17) seems to emphasize this perception when he holds that the highest civil

appointment and sacerdotal office was held by the High Priest of Amen that was also the Grand Vizier during this period.

Säve-Söderbergh (1963: 75) suggests that the cream of society lived in Akhetaten: the vizier Nakht; Aton's high priest, Pawah; Apy, the Royal Scribe and Steward to the Household and Mahu, Chief of Police (cf. Samson 1985: 36). Smith and Redford (1976: 122 - 123), however, hold that on the basis that the Amarna prosopography yield scant information with regard to the ancestry of courtiers and officials who held positions of power, these men can be regarded as stemming from the lower class. Clayton (1994: 123) suggests that the standard bureaucracy ran the affairs of the land as they saw fit. Weigall (1923: 137) and Bleeker and Widengren (1969: 50) propagate that Akhenaten's adherence to "high principles" enhanced neglect in the administration of the Egyptian empire and alludes to the idea that many of the appointed foreign officials, especially Aziru, had no wish to serve a pharaoh that seemed inefficient in matters of state and was unable to enforce the payment of tribute to maintain Egypt's economy (cf. Redford 1993: 176). Redford (1993: 175) emphasizes this perception of turmoil when he holds that Akhenaten left correspondence unattended and kept messages at court for an indefinite time.

Trigger (1983: 211) suggests that the stability of government was maintained when effective linkage between central and provincial government existed and supervision of the latter was adhered to — both factors were sadly lacking during Akhenaten's reign. Redford (1993: 175) furthermore suggests that Egypt's military was largely inactive, since Akhenaten predominantly adopted a policy of leniency towards his Asiatic empire; the deportation of a community to Nubia being the exception rather than the rule. In the light of the aforesaid, the basis on which the numerous awards of "gold for bravery" in battle such as these received by Ahmose si - Abina and Panekhet is highly suspect, since Weigall (1923: 202) advocates that Akhenaten had an "abhorrence of war" (cf. Smith and Redford 1976: 123). The latter's passivity towards war is exemplified by the fact that despite having the

services of Horemheb, commander - in - chief of the idle army, destined to become king in later years, Akhenaten did not retaliate when the king of Mitanni detained Mani, the pharaonic envoy (cf. Weigall 1923: 195; Smith and Redford 1976: 34).

The duality in Egyptian religious thought and conduct is exemplified in Horemheb's revocable of Amen worship and polytheism to an adherence to Aton and monotheism, a revocable of the latter and an adherence to the former, which had at its basis a pursuit of political gain, since his coronation coincided with the restoration of the Opet festival that Akhenaten suspended (Kemp 1989: 209). It is noteworthy that the sources do not mention any award giving from Akhenaten to Horemheb, despite the important position the latter held, though the former rewarded other military officials.

The economic and political action is exemplified in the fact that local mayors all over the Egyptian empire paid personal taxes, supervised the collecting of taxes and tribute payable to Egypt and administered compulsory labour levies. The latter is aptly portrayed in the summons of Egyptians " from Elephantine to Samhudet" to quarry stone at Silsileh to build the "great **bnbn** of Reharakhty" at Karnak (cf. Baikie 1929: 232; Trigger 1983: 217; Redford 1993: 175; Smith and Redford 1976: 45, 117). The latter scholars suggest that according to the Karnak **talatat**, a string of non sacerdotal titles attest the court and government positions in Nefertiti's time. The fact that " king's children" — male and female — participated in the king's following at the Sed - festival, points to a form of social democratization and gender equity that enjoyed more prominence since, besides the king, only the queen of the royal family is **distinctly** portrayed in scenes with regard to major cultic functions (cf. Smith and Redford 1976: 65, 102; Bleeker and Widengren 1969: 80). The degree of despotism that so many pharaoh's were guilty of, is aptly displayed by Akhenaten when he decreed the cessation of religious festivals, especially the Opet festival, as well as the worship of other gods; a factor which created dissatisfaction among the populace (cf. Trigger 1983: 221; Knapp 1988: 221).

Smith and Redford (1976: 107 - 112) suggest that Akhenaten's government included the position of "harem overseer of Nefertiti", a post held by Meryre, and the rdww i.e., administrators who, according to the Turin Canon and Nauri Decree ruled foreign places such as the Kush territory on behalf of the pharaoh. The infantry officers and the police guarded the frontiers and the latter also exercised law in harbours and towns. Other important offices were held by the granary scribe and the overseer of peasants who managed a large part of the workforce and agricultural income.

Scholars postulate two contrasting reasons, theopolitical and social, for Nefertiti and Akhenaten's estrangement. White (1970: 173) and Cottrell (1966: 26) attribute the estrangement to the fact that Akhenaten declared Smenkhare his co - regent. Akhenaten sent the latter to Thebes in an attempt to mend the theopolitical rupture that existed between Akhenaten and the Amen priesthood since the fourth year of Akhenaten's co - regency with his father, Amenophis III, before the former left Thebes for Amarna (cf. Hayes 1978: 281). These scholars thus indirectly stress the fact that Nefertiti and Smenkhare were different persons which contrasts with Samson's (1985: 96) view that the aforesaid held the same identity. Säve - Söderbergh (1963: 82) and Knapp (1988: 179) suggest that Nefertiti did not support Akhenaten's religious reconciliation with the Amen priesthood and therefore deserted Akhenaten, but Murray (1954: 55) ascribes a political motive to Nefertiti's desertion of Akhenaten when she suggests that Nefertiti left Akhenaten when she realized that her place as co - regent was usurped by Smenkhare.

Baikie (1929: 277) negates the viewpoint of some scholars who ascribe Nefertiti's desertion of Akhenaten to the fact that Nefertiti went to Thebes and was claimed rival ruler by the Amen priesthood, on the basis that there is little evidence to support such an argument. He holds that unerased inscriptions in a relief scene from the Year 12 ascribe the titles of "Lady of Grace" and "heiress" to Nefertiti which serve as an indicator that Nefertiti had not fallen from grace, thus, contradicting the statement of Clayton (1994: 124) that the replacement of

Nefertiti's name with that of her daughter, Meryet - Aton, emphasizes the fact that Nefertiti was disgraced. Smith and Redford (1976: 93) on the other hand, hold that the erasure of Nefertiti's name from the Maru - Aton complex and the temple area in favour of Meryet - Aton's name and the almost complete absence of Nefertiti from the North Palace, remains unexplained and only serve to indicate that Meryet-Aton held a favourable position — a viewpoint with which the present writer identifies.

Velikovsky and Peet (1960: 104, 206) allot Nefertiti's desertion of Akhenaten in the Year 12 to a rivalry that erupted between Queen Tiy and Nefertiti for the position of queen consort. They suggest that Akhenaten harboured an Oedipus complex that climaxed in an incestuous relationship — causing Akhenaten to be labelled a criminal — with Queen Tiy from which Beketaton “a child of the king's body” was borne more than six years after her husband, Amenophis III's, death. Robins (1993: 15) argues that the viewpoint of scholars with regard to the existence of incestuous relationship in ancient Egypt might be perceived as a form of modern prejudice that is based on ingrained notions of incest in contemporary, modern families. Smith and Redford (1976: 93) hold that inscriptional labels such as “king's bodily daughter” reflects filiation to the king in the mechanical lineage system which should not be interpreted as an incestuous marriage nor that Nefertiti has fallen from grace.

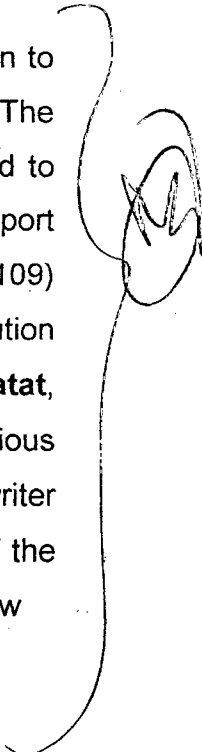
A similar debate as the one evolving around Nefertiti's origin, emerge with regard to Nefertiti's death. Samson (1985: 99) and Hayes (1978: 296) hold that no evidence has surfaced to suggest how much longer Nefertiti lived and what happened to her burial after the collapse of Amarna as capital of Egypt. However, Smith and Redford (1976: 94) suggest that the fact that Nefertiti's name appear at Amarna and Thebes in the formula of filiation after Akhenaten's death, positively ascribes to her continued presence at the royal court. These scholars furthermore suggest that Nefertiti possibly died in the third year of Tutankhamon's reign. Clayton (1994: 124) on the other hand, derives from the archaeological find of an alabaster ushabti figure

bearing Nefertiti's cartouche, that Nefertiti was buried at Amarna — the present writer identifies with the viewpoints of both Smith and Redford (1976: 94) and Clayton (1994: 124), but perceives these incidents as naturally following in a chronological order.

4.6. Religion

Scholars hold diverse viewpoints on the three great epochs in the development of Egyptian religion. Murray (1954: 163) suggests that religion in prehistoric time evolved around the god Osiris and a concept of resurrection. She maintains that the onset of pharaonic rule heralded a merger of religious concepts that is exemplified in the development of the Horus and Setekh saga which relates the victory of the Egyptian god Horus who conquered foreign nations which had a crocodile or hippopotamus as totem. In this manner the Egyptian expansionist policy was justified through the employment of myth which traditional royal ideology prior to Akhenaten's rule perpetuated. Murray (1954: 163) also postulates that sun worship was introduced in the third or fourth and fifth dynasty which culminated under Akhenaten, because Aton - worship failed to become the religion of the people during the reign of his successors (cf. Weigall 1923: 226).

Some scholars attribute the original impetus for Akhenaten's religious revolution to Queen Tiye's powerful influence (cf. Rawlinson 1886: 228; Weigall 1923: 19). The naming of her barge "Aton Gleams" is reminiscent of the god Aton of the third to fifth dynasty (Murray 1954: 163). Baikie (1929: 220) holds that no evidence support the view that Queen Tiye influenced her son. Others, such as Cottrell (1966: 109) speculate on the idea that the motive power which initiated the religious revolution might perhaps be attributed to Nefertiti who, derived from scenes on the **talatat**, obviously supported the new religion and enjoyed unsurpassed religious prominence as queen (Smith and Redford 1976: 28 -29). The present writer identifies with Murray's view (1954: 163), but equally ascribes the elevation of the Aton religion to an interaction of Nefertiti and Akhenaten's peculiar religious view

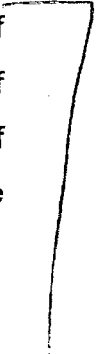


and political status, and suggests that basically the religious view was politically motivated to counter the power of the Amen priesthood (cf. Trigger 1983: 220; Clayton 1994: 121).



Weigall (1923: 1) perceives the reign of Akhenaten as particularly interesting in the long sequence of Egyptian history. Bleeker and Widengren (1969: 50) on the other hand, ascribes the reformation of Amenophis IV - Akhenaten as the first great epoch in Egyptian religion. Secondly, they perceive the influence of foreign deities such as the Canaanite deities, Baal and Anat during the New Kingdom period as the second great epoch. These scholars posited that the third outstanding epoch in Egyptian religion is the restoration of Egyptian religious life through a conversion to the style of the Old Kingdom by the 26th dynasty (603 - 525) which culminated in the rule of the Ptolemics with the erection of the Edfu and Esna temples.

Most scholars, particularly Hornung (Allen 1989: 100) concede that Akhenaten established a new theo - ideology when he refuted the traditional world view — which partly equates Murray's (1954: 163) first two epochs — with his radical shift in thought that evolved around the worship of a sole solar deity. The sense of tension in the relationship between polytheism and monotheism in Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's period of rule is closely related to Akhenaten's new ideology. Akhenaten's ideology constituted of a revocable of the Amen worship and a conceptualization that the pharaoh was the product of a divine union between the queen and the sun-god incarnated in human form; as well as a prohibition of multiple forms, names and figures of worship other than the Aton. The latter was perceived as the universal creator of life (cf. Kemp 1989: 262; Allen 1989: 92). Imbedded in this ideology, one detects narcissist traits that elevated the position of Akhenaten and his consort queen, Nefertiti, since this ideology instilled a sense of loyalism in Aton-worshippers who were indirectly subjected to the worship of Akhenaten (Allen 1989: 99). The scholar Mah (1987: 229) asserts that the formulation of the theory of ideology interacts with social dislocation. This idea can



be correlated to the actions of the Akhetaten community who left Thebes in pursuit of a new religion at Amarna.

A twofold theory might be ascribed to the action of this migratory group. Firstly, one can ascribe a theory of “an anthropology of will” to the steps taken by these people, since it marks a replacement of “wisdom” and *maat* by “piety” and the will of god, heralding a transference from the social sphere to a man-god relationship in the religious sphere — a factor that weakens social obligation (Allen 1989: 73,80). Secondly, the personal ethics of this group is circumspect, since they left Thebes for Akhetaten in the pursuit of wealth — an action that not only contrasts with the principles of *maat*, but appears to be contradictory to what is being advocated in the books of wisdom in which the teaching of Ptahhotep etc., is expositied. The temporary denunciation of the god Amen and polytheism in preference of monotheism and the Aton-worship, also cause this group to transgress the cultic rules. The sources, however, yield no information as to the fate of this particular group at Thebes, other than that Horemheb acted against the Aton and its adherents some years later, after the short rules of Smenkhare and Tutankhamon (cf. Bleeker and Widengren 1969: 91,92; Weigall 1923: 70; White 1970: 174, 175).

Mannheim, (cited in Mah 1987: 229) qualifies to an extent the theory of ideology when he equates the latter to a “systematization of doubt” i.e., the theory strives to determine how thought operates in the concrete world and how the individual seeks to reconnect theory in reality. The latter is exemplified in Allen’s suggestion (1989: 90 - 91) that Akhenaten introduced into Egypt a new perception with regard to the functionality of the divine in the world which affected man’s understanding of the fundamental nature of reality. Mainly drawing on what Assmann (1989:68) and Allen (1989: 92) advocate with regard to the Aton - religion, an exposition of the latter will convey that the traditional cosmic and socio-political spheres altered from a dominant negative anthropo - cosmology in Thebes to a positive, but an “insubstantial and distant” one in Amarna. Assmann (1989: 65) and Allen (1989:94) advocate a concept of anthropocentrism when they hold that the Aton is the god

itself other than the sun-disk i.e., the force that inaugurates light and the life of mankind. Assmann (1989: 67) suggests that the latter concept juxtaposes the traditional concept of anthropomorphism that encompassed the existence of a plurality of gods and the immanent concept of chaos in the solar cycle, since the Aton religion negates the idea that mankind's social order serves as a reflection of one which exists in the pantheon.

Allen (1989: 94) and Assmann (1989: 68) hold that the Aton religion evolved around the single principle that the world is subjected to — and governed by light, which according to Assmann (1989: 67) encompass no social ethical denotations i.e., the king is not perceived as the protector of the poor, but is singled out as the only one entitled to revealed knowledge and "truth". Allen's suggestion (1989: 99) that Akhenaten and not the god became to human beings what light is for nature, namely that of animator, creator, sustainer and determinant of recurrent life, alludes to the idea that Akhenaten usurped the god's role amongst his people. The social and religious interaction is evident in the fact that this role was exclusively "democratized" in the sense that only Nefertiti shared in the "revealed knowledge" and "truth". This factor suggests that remnants of the discarded world view still held some importance at Amarna, since the aforesaid serves as a reflection of the hegemonic social hierarchy and conveys the sense of separateness the royal family had from the rest of the Egyptian society (Robins 1983: 16). This perception is furthermore emphasized by Knapp (1989: 178) when he suggests that Akhenaten elevated his divine status by "commanding" Egyptians to worship him and in doing the latter, asserted his family's sole right to the worship of Aton.

The scholars Hovestreydt et al., (1996: 207) ascribe a twofold theory to Assmann's approach with regard to the "cosmological and extravert monotheism" that Akhenaten propagated and Nefertiti actively adhered to. They endorse Assmann's perception that Akhenaten's monotheism equates a philosophy of nature which evolved around a unique source and force of creation, namely the "Heat which is in the Aton" and "light which is in the Aton" that Akhenaten elevated into religion (cf.

Murray 1954:299). Assmann (1989: 94) suggests that the "Great Hymn" from the Amarna tomb of Ay ascribes attributes such as "animater", "sustainer" etc., to the manner in which light operates in nature. Scholars seem overwhelming in favour of an equation of Atonism and Hebrew monotheism. Samson (1985: 32) suggests that scholars equate the poem/hymn inscribed in the tomb of Ay to that of Psalm 104 that was written some 500 years later. Weigall (1923: 136) raises the possibility of a common Syrian source for Akhenaten's poem and Psalm 104 and suggests that Psalm 104 might be derived from Akhenaten's poem. Cottrell (1966: 140) on the other hand, holds that Gardiner propagated that the prayer/hymn which Weigall and purportedly Assmann ascribe to Akhenaten in reverence to his god, was in fact masterminded by Nefertiti and addressed to her husband — a viewpoint that enjoys little support.

Hovestreydt et al., (1996: 207) furthermore suggest that Assmann equates a parallel between the Aton religion's anti - polytheistic and revolutionary force and that of the Old Testament, where the sole worship of a single god manifested itself in lawgiving and morality. White (1970: 171) endorses the latter viewpoint when he suggests that Akhenaten decreed the Aton as the sole god of Egypt which contrasted with his father, Amenophis III's more tolerant approach apparent in the latter's acceptance of the Aton as one god amongst many. Knapp (1988: 179) on the other hand, holds that there is no equation between Atonism and Hebrew monotheism, since the latter encompassed legal and ritual prohibitions completely alien to Atonism whose sole ritual evolved around offering scenes (cf. Smith and Redford 1976: 98). The latter scholars also questions the fact whether the Aton should be considered as a sole god on the basis that Tawfik, (in Smith and Redford 1976: 58 - 59) points out that the gods Reharakhty, Shu and Aton represent three individual divine shapes of a single solar deity, all of which Akhenaten and thus Nefertiti as well, worshipped in the early years of the former's reign at Thebes (cf. Weigall 1923: 55).

Hayes (1978: 281) posited that Akhenaten built a temple to the Aton at Karnak

which was provided with a solar obelisk or benben of sandstone. Smith and Redford (1976 : 45, 49), however, stress that Amenophis IV / Akhenaten adhered to continuing temple construction at Thebes in the first nine years of his reign. These scholars suggest that temple construction followed a chronological order that started with the erection of the Reharakhty temple followed by the construction of a temple at Amarna — the latter is also known as Akhetaten which means “The Horizon of the Disk” — which again was possibly followed by the construction of the Aton temple at Luxor (cf. Cottrell 1966: 97). The aforesaid scholars derive the latter factor from a **talatat** at the Luxor temple (pl. 84: 7) that bore the name of Akhenaten which had not been altered from an original Amenophis. Daressy (in Smith and Redford 1976; 48, 98) holds that a particular feature of this temple was an Aton disk with the usual expanding sunrays terminating in sunken hands that contrast with another scene at the **Rwd - mnw** temple in which the rays ended in raised hands, — which thus represents a deviation from multiple portrayals of descending rays that culminate in sunken hands. Cottrell (1966: 96) furthermore suggests that a royal uraeus formed the apex of the disk in a similar way that it crowned the brow of Akhenaten.

Samson (1985: 29,61) and Cottrell (1966: 115) hold that the Aton temples at Amarna were roofless, open structures, constructed to foresee that the direct light of the sky shines on worshippers, unlike earlier and later Egyptian temples, but Smith and Redford (1976: 36) hold that archaeological evidence support the belief that the roofing of colonnades and subsidiary temple elements existed. Smith and Redford (1976: 59, 61- 62) also hold that the temple structures or temple area carried varied descriptive epithets such as “lord of all that the sundisks surrounds” and that the temple or shrines carried names such as “ finding of the Aton”, “the monument of Aton flourishes forever” or “ House of the Aton” etc. Derived from pictorial scenes, these scholars suggest that the objects offered to the Aton were the contents of a jar, or two **nw-** vases or a censer or loaves of bread in which a number of priests, depending on the ceremony, assisted the king (Smith and

Redford 1976: 98 - 99). These scholars, however, hold that with the exception of the **wr - m3w** priests, the different groups of priests seem not to be present at Amarna, since no evidence has survived to support such a view. In contrast to the aforesaid, it is noteworthy that Nefertiti is depicted either with Akhenaten or alone with some of her children in offering scenes that do not attest the presence of any priests (Samson 1985: 60).

Weigall (1923: 108, 112) suggests that the ceremonial side of the Aton religion constituted of a ceremonial adoration of the sunrise and sunset hour. He furthermore suggests that the priests offered sacrifices of fruit, vegetables and flowers etc., to the Aton that excluded the offering of human sacrifices — the latter contrasted with the traditional rituals adhered to by the Amen priesthood. He holds that the ceremony was closely associated with music, prayers and psalms that were sung. Smith and Redford (1976: 66) maintain that the offering ritual still included cattle - slaughtering, according to scenes in shrines (pls, 73: 1; 74) and Stead (1986: 33) holds that the hump-backed Bhraminy bull from the Near East came to Egypt in the New Kingdom period and probably would have been slaughtered for offering.

Samson (1985: 19) ascribes historical significance to the fact that Nefertiti departed from the traditional queenly role of playing the sistrum in religious events, a factor which signifies the progression in Nefertiti's status as co-regent in comparison with other queens. Weigall (1923:18) on the other hand, holds that the title "She who sends the Aton to rest with a sweet voice, and with her two beautiful hands bearing two sistrums" which was found inscribed in the tomb of Ay, suggests that Nefertiti also fulfilled the traditional role assigned to a queen. Stead (1986: 59) suggests that a wide variety of stringed, wind and percussion instruments were played during the New Kingdom period. The importance of music in religious events and state banquets is emphasized in relief scenes that depict naked girls playing the harp, the lute and the lyre; female musicians that beat upon tambourines and people who rhythmically clap hands to tribal singing (cf. Weigall 1923: 118; Samson 1985: 74,

81; Stead 1986: 58). Stead (1986: 59) suggests that the blind was often depicted singing or playing harps; Stead (1986: 59) suggests that the angular harp was imported from Asia — a factor which once again points to the religious and economic interaction and signifies the process of diffusion which can be closely correlated to the existing trade procedures during that period.

Scholars concede that Nefertiti's exalted religious role and status are amply conveyed in Egyptian iconography (Lesko 1987: 7 - 8; Samson 1985: 20). In relation to the aforesaid, Smith and Redford (1976: 28 - 29) derive from scenes on the Karnak **talatat** which convey a domination of the larger offering tables by Nefertiti statues, that Nefertiti matched the religious stature of Akhenaten. The latter is emphasized by the fact that Nefertiti at first had her own temple at Karnak according to one **talatat** (pl. 83: 4) where Nefertiti is shown in an offering scene with the sun - disk located directly above her, and after the move to Amarna, once again had her own sanctuary known as **Gm(t) - p3 - itn** or "House of putting the Aton to Rest" (Smith and Redford 1976: 27, 46, 56; Weigall 1923: 172). Lesko (1987: 8) suggests that scenes at Karnak which portray Nefertiti and Meryet - Aton in offering scenes at an altar, emphasize the idea of Nefertiti's elevated position and stress the fact that the manner of Nefertiti's portrayal equates that of pharaohs who were depicted in offering scenes in preceding periods. The economic and religious interaction is exemplified in James' (1984: 266) suggestion that a large amount of agricultural produce fell to the temple for offering ritual to the god, which again reverted to the priest and their families, dependants and workers of the temples and temple estates, to which Nefertiti and Akhenaten actively contributed through their offering and remuneration to the aforesaid from the treasury of the Disk (cf. Smith and Redford 1976: 123).

Samson (1985: 20) holds that Nefertiti's religious and regal importance combined with an acknowledgement of her femininity, is aptly conveyed in the change of the usual phrase of "He who Found the Aton" to "**She** who Found the Aton" which was found inscribed in the Nefertiti pillars. Samson (1985: 20) holds that Nefertiti's

religious importance is acclaimed in her performance of the ritual of "Purification" in libation ceremonies to the god. Smith and Redford's (1976: 27) suggestion that the cleansing of the "table of offerings" was done by the pouring of water from a group of three or four *hs* vases alludes to an interaction with Samson's (1985: 20) latter idea.

A certain similarity emerges in the Amen religion of Hatshepsut and Aton religion of Nefertiti with regard to the earthly dwellings of their gods. Weigall (1923: 129) holds that the 1922 excavations conducted by the Egypt Exploration Society revealed the remains of the "Precinct of Aton" which was a sort of sacred pleasure garden that equates the "garden for my father Amen" that Hatshepsut had designed and contained real shrubs and trees — (Clayton 1994: 105). An obsession with regard to the afterlife seems prevalent in both the Aton and Amen religions. Contrary to the old belief that encompassed the idea that the dead faced the judgement of Osiris in the hereafter, the Aton religion propagated that the soul of the dead was not subjected to judgement, since it negated the existence of a plurality of gods, but that it rested in heaven or visited earth in shadowy form (Weigall 1923: 121). Smith and Redford (1976: 99) seem to emphasize Weigall's theory when they suggest that the ancient Egyptians believed that the shadow was an essential spiritual element of every human being. The Akhetaten community shared the same fear as the Theban community of dying a "second death", and adhered to the ancient custom of adorning the walls of their tombs and coffins with religious inscriptions in an attempt to subvert " ... perishing in the land of the dead". The only difference was that the mentioned inscriptions of the Akhetaten community equated extracts that were sung in the temples of the Aton which contrasted with the writing of specific spells to which the Theban community adhered (Weigall 1923: 129; Tyldesley 1994: 25).

Samson (1985: 89) suggests that nothing in Egypt was "sacrosanct". The latter idea is exemplified in the religious and political interaction attested in tomb robberies that was rife through all the periods in Egyptian history. The latter might

be perceived as some sort of defiance as to what was preached but not practiced by ancient Egyptians. It underlines the duality in Egyptian thought that seems to be wrapped up in the saying that "the end defies the means", since ancient Egyptians whose sole wish was for an eternal life, showed no scruples in deriving others from such an existence by obliterating the name and earthly memory of the deceased (Tyldesley 1994: 25). The latter is epitomized in the archaeological finding of the Second Pylon which conveys a scene where Horemheb officiates a hypothetical ceremony in which a workman slashed transverse cuts in sunray hands (Smith and Redford 1976:34). The latter scholars maintain that Horemheb inaugurated the extensive defacement and dismantling of the figure of Nefertiti and the crushing of monuments and city architecture that commemorated Nefertiti and Akhenaten, and in doing so, effectively ensured them of dying a "second death" and robbed them of an existence in the afterlife, according to ancient Egyptian belief (Smith and Redford 1976: 34; Tyldesley 1994: 25). On another plane, the tomb robberies points to the ineffective policing that was carried out by the Medjay - police force.

4.7.. Social organization and culture

Robins (1993: 12, 17) remains critical of an ingrained bias in surviving texts, which she contributes to the fact that the scribal elite executed tasks from a male perspective in accord to a custom that did not entertain any contribution of women who were largely illiterate (Robins 1993: 13). Most scholars, however, are in agreement that the Amarna Revolution epitomizes a naturalistic style in art that signifies a departure from old traditions and rigid conventions of Egyptian culture and art, but Weigall (1923: 63) holds that the rejuvenated art paralleled the classical period of archaic days that emphasized the king's character as the representative of Reharakhty (cf. Knapp 1988: 179; Robins 1993: 233).

Murray (1954: 102, 104) holds that though marriage laws were not formulated, women were greatly respected in society. Scholars concede that the sanctity of family life and the position of women attained new heights in the light of Nefertiti

and Akhenaten's defiance of conformity in a male dominated society, which is particularly evident in the influence that Nefertiti exercised with regard to the norms that were traditionally set by men. (Cottrell 1966: 104, 108; Robins 1993: 18, 19; Clayton 1994: 124). The latter is attested in the display of mutual affection in public by the royal couple in direct opposition to tradition, at one of the most prestigious occasions in Year 12 when envoys from the south and the east of Egypt paid their tributes at the Hall of Tribute at Amarna (Samson 1985: 71 - 72).

Tyldesley (1994: 20) holds that the Egyptians were a uxorious race who took pride in fathering as many children as possible. Tyldesley (1994: 23) holds that the fertile woman who gave birth numerous times, gained the approval of both the society and her husband. The latter idea might provide some insight into Nefertiti's unusual prominence during the reign of Akhenaten and the latter's obvious devotion to her, and might be correlated to the fact that Nefertiti had born Akhenaten six daughters (Hayes 1978: 281). On the one hand, the latter factor applauds Akhenaten's male potency and on the other hand the multiple births secured Nefertiti's social position which seemed not in the least threatened by the advent of Akhenaten's secondary wife, known as Kiya who is thought to have born Akhenaten two more daughters and a son — a factor which effectively counters Weigall's (1923: 156) assumption that Akhenaten was a monogamist (cf. Samson 1985: 69). James (1984: 25) maintains that one needs to place some credence on ancient texts, but Bardis (1988: 39) holds that a synopsis of a family system "can never be accurate" when the subject of study is ancient. This theory is exemplified in the case where Harris in 1974 discovered the erroneous misreading of what lay underneath the hieroglyphs which had undergone several erasures and replacements of Nefertiti's name by that of Kiya, and has given rise to an earlier theory that Nefertiti had "disappeared" and that a youth had usurped her place (cf. Samson 1985: 68; Murray 1954: 55).

Akhenaten's enchantment with Nefertiti's beauty is attested in the inscriptions in epithets such as "sweet of love", and even Nefertiti's descriptive name which

means "The Beautiful Woman has Come" applauds her beauty (Samson 1985: 12; Cottrell 1966: 86). Bleeker and Widengren (1969: 52) suggest that the ancient Egyptians felt akin to the gods who according to Egyptian belief, encompassed **nfrw** i.e. "beauty" or are perceived as being "fair" (**nfr**) of face. **Nfr** means ethical and cosmic "good" or "beautiful" which equates the attributes that are conferred upon Egyptians who carried connotations of such names. The aforesaid is aptly portrayed by the statue - head of Nefertiti which is presently found in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin; similarly Nefertiti's ethical and cosmic "good" is conveyed in her worship of one creative god (Samson 1985: 7, 20).

The importance of names amongst Egyptians is furthermore attested in name changes that is thought to confer power, as was the case with Nefertiti who had the names of Nefernefruaton and Ankheprure (Samson 1985: 87). The latter factor contrasted with the name appropriation of non - royal personages who ordinarily had one personal name to which that of his father might be attached (Tyldesley 1994: 26; Bardis 1988: 39). The socio - religio - ecological interaction emerges in the naming of Egyptian children after beautiful flowers, for example, the name "Susan" which means "lotus flower", and is also apparent in the naming of children immediately after birth to secure the infant's fate in the hereafter (Tyldesley 1994: 25, 26). Bardis (1988: 42) suggests that according to the Papyrus Ebers, the infant's cry of "**ny**" at birth indicated a promise of subsequent life, but the cry of "**amby**" in concurrence with a downward facing of the infant, were perceived as sure signs of an approaching death.

Weigall (1923: 11) suggests that Akhenaten and Nefertiti "democratized" their social position, attested in their chariot - driving around Akhetaten whilst accompanied by their family — an activity that no pharaoh adhered to in preceding periods. The change in world view heralded a peculiar "democratization" with regard to the hereditary principle prevalent in religious institutions, in the sense that Akhenaten overruled the hereditary principle with his appointment of new officials from the lower estate, in civil and religious positions, such as Meryra, who became

the "High Priest of the Aton in the City of the Horizon" (Weigall 1923: 138; Smith and Redford 1976: 97). However, some traditions such as the barter system in the village and the countryside and the reciprocal arrangement between central government and temples that were income generating through land rentals in some sort of monetary system, and trading continued (cf. James 1984: 261, 243; Trigger 1983: 202). Trigger (1983: 219) suggests that the royal succession remained patrilineal and that royal wives still had a symbolically critical role to play.

Trigger (1983: 192) furthermore holds that according to the Wilbour Papyrus, the civil government and the military institutions remained hierarchical structures throughout the New Kingdom period in which the royal dynasty and high - ranking officials held paramount positions. He suggests that a perpetual stratification in society was apparent in the existence of a middle class that was formed by lesser bureaucrats, priests and artisans who still adhered to the hereditary principle attested in the positions held by the tomb - builders at Deir el - Medina (cf. Stead 1986: 44). Trigger (1983: 192) maintains that a lower class existed which was formed by the poor, peasants, soldiers and slaves; the latter being mainly Asiatics or Nubians that were prisoners of war or were brought into Egypt by merchants (cf. Stead 1986: 23, 24).

The social, political and economic interaction is furthermore exemplified in James' (1984: 248) suggestion that the state's economic hegemony comes to the fore in the sense that "merchants" in the foreign trade probably were royal officials under the control of the Treasury, and those in the country probably owed their appointments to the offices of their vizir, provincial governors and the temples. The plight of the poor perpetuated under Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's rule. James (1984:266) suggests that in the absence of an income in goods and faced with a lack of skills, the poor could not advance beyond a simple subsistence level. Stead (1986: 23) holds that the elite class was exempted from the *corvée*, as well as those that could afford to pay for exemption, leaving only the poor and slaves to be subjected to the *corvée* and fierce punishment, according to a papyrus in the

Brooklyn Museum, if they failed to adhere to conscripted duties that usually encompassed backbreaking toil (cf. James 1984: 118). James (1984: 194) holds that labour groups who lived in crude conditions in Nubia and Syria, were responsible for the extraction of gold by ore crushing and washing under supervision along quasi — military lines - a factor which attests to the coercive methods employed by the state to serve its own ends. The latter is attested in Akhenaten's presentation of his gold collar, two bracelets and two arm - bands to an honoured official on little pretext (Smith and Redford 1976:124).

Exemption from the *corvée* was also extended to dextrous craftsmen who worked eight days out of ten, such as those employed in the Place of the Truth. The latter was responsible for the making of the magnificent blue painted buff vessels, splendid ritual jugs in gold and silver and jewellery that was made from Asiatic raw materials. The latter is attested in the 1930 El Amarna archaeological find that was probably the surviving metal stock from a jeweller's workshop (cf. James 1984: 182 - 188; Stead 1986: 44 - 45). Stead (1986: 54) ascribes the popularity of jewellery to the fact that it was not only worn as a personal adornment, but also had religious value in the sense that it served the purpose of protecting the wearer from ill fate.

James (1984: 123) suggests that linen was a basic commodity with a high value in the barter system. A revolutionized code of dress, in which the fabric of linen was mainly employed, emerged amongst ancient Egyptians of the late Eighteenth Dynasty (Stead 1986: 46). Cottrell (1966: 82) deduces from wall paintings in the tomb of Ramose that elegance characterized the fashion style of this period, attested in the apparel of the lady Meryl, the wife of May, the King's Master of Horse, who is seen wearing a tight sheath dress, curled wig, a broad collar made up of hundreds of tiny lapis and carnelian beads that covers the upper part of her chest. Smith and Redford (1976: 82) holds that Nefertiti also wore the customary dress at court, evident in her wearing of an ankle - length gown with fringed edges that was tied beneath the breasts with a sash. Samson (1985: 42) furthermore holds that Nefertiti and her daughters wore gowns that revealed their bodies, as the

gowns were completely open down the front. Bardis (1988: 41) and Stead (1986: 47) emphasize this lack of inhibitions on the part of ancient Egyptians, when the former suggests that in view of the country's hot climate, it was customary for children under the age of twelve to walk in the nude, wearing only earrings and a belt of beads around the hips or for working men to go around naked. Smith and Redford (1976: 81) holds that according to scenes of the House of the Disk on the Karnak **talatat**, it is evident that Nefertiti wore five different types of head-dress. These scholars suggest that Nefertiti firstly favoured the disk with horns topped by feathers and secondly gave preference to wearing the tall feathers alone without disk to compliment the costume she wore.

With regard to the clothes that men wore during the reign of Nefertiti and Akhenaten, Stead (1986: 48) suggests that men wore a light shawl or cloak over the shoulders that served as the finishing touch to an assemblage of clothes which Smith and Redford (1976: 13,97) suggest consisted of short - sleeved shirts, a knee - length kilt with pleated " sporran" and wigs, worn with a sash as a head-dress to priests. Stead (1986: 49) holds that the ancient Egyptians wore sandals that were made of woven reed, grass or leather. The latter is attested in a scene at Amarna that depicts a priest carrying Akhenaten's sandals on a stick, while Akhenaten is on his way to worship at a kiosk (Smith and Redford 1976: 97).

It would seem that the elite classes gave preference to leather sandals, attested in the red leather sandals that were found in the cosmetic chest of the lady Tutu, wife of the scribe Ani according to Stead (1986: 49), which James (1984: 200) suggests were pink - stained leather sandals! It would seem that the colour "red" was overall favoured by Egyptians of the elite class, attested in a scene from the tomb of Ay, "Overseer of His Majesty's" as well as "Father of the God", which depicts Nefertiti handing over to Ay some gold collars and other gifts which include a set of red gloves (Samson 1985: 57). Blackman (1921: 27) suggests that the title "father [s] of the god" was a title that was attributed to an official that adhered to priestly functions, and thus one gathers that in Ay's case, it held no reference to his filiation

to the king who married his daughter Nefertiti. A scene in the tomb of Huya depicts the state visit of Queen Tiye to Amarna and shows that the diners attending a banquet in honour of Queen Tiye, rest their sandalled feet on red hassocks (Samson 1985: 79). The ancient Egyptian's preference of the colour "red", does not mean that they were incapable of blending colours. Samson (1985: 44) holds that a painted wall scene of Nefertiti's home at Amarna reflects the colours red, blue and yellow. These were not the only colours ancient Egyptians adhered to and Samson (1985: 44) posited that two of the princesses are depicted in this wall scene with white painted toe - nails. Furthermore, Cottrell (1966: 86) suggests that the Egyptian woman's love of cosmetics is attested in green eye - paint of malachite powder, black eye - paint and rouge that Nefertiti used. Stead (1986:54) suggests that the latter product is the result of mixture of red ochre in a base of fat or gum - resin that the ancient Egyptians used to colour their cheeks.

Legrain, (quoted in Blackman 1921: 17) holds that there is no parallel in all Egyptian art when compared to that produced by artist and sculptors that were associated with the court of Akhenaten. Scholars generally are in awe of the splendour of art during the Amarna Period which Samson (1985: 43-44) terms as "naturalistic", attested in the Petrie Museum on a painted wall scene that depicts Nefertiti's family in natural poses that radiates vibrancy and the tenderness of family life. Bardis (1988:39) suggests that the family formed the core of Egyptian religious life, socialization and served as the basis for the transmission of occupational secrets and private property. Blackman (1921: 20) suggests that the family's total involvement in religious matters is attested in Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's worship of the solar disk while their daughters rattled the sistra.

A papyrus entitled "The Pleasure of Fishing and Fowling" suggests the pastimes of ancient Egyptians, which took the form of bird trapping and hunting; athletic games and sports were also popular. Children had a variety of toys and families played board games of which the **senet** board was most popular (Stead 1986: 56, 58, 62-63). Bardis (1988:43) suggests that women were granted social and legal freedom

with unusual property rights which, according to Robins (1993: 18), were closely correlated to the expectation that they should remain faithful. According to Smith and Redford (1976: 93) Nefertiti's had ownership of an estate. Tyldesley (1994: 235) emphasizes Nefertiti's innovative moves when she suggests that the Nefertiti preferred active participation in proceedings rather than being an onlooker in Akhetaten's homogeneous community that consisted of large families where the rich lived in huge "villas" and drove chariots and the poor lived in houses as small as 13m. long and 4m. wide (cf. James 1984: 231, 233, 237).

James (1984: 220, 224) suggests that Theban tombs of the Eighteenth - dynasty officials, as well as the foundations of the abandoned city of Akhetaten convey the Egyptian ideal of a home which ideally should have space, water and shade, trees and flowers. A fair idea of how the ideal was put into practice, which also signifies the social and religious interaction, comes to the fore in James' (1984: 225, 227) suggestion that the houses of the elite in Akhetaten had elaborately decorated rooms with nature scenes. Furthermore, the principal doorways were inscribed with their titles and honours and at times with offering texts that resemble those written in tombs. James (1984:234, 237) furthermore holds that beautiful tomb furniture of various designs, especially those that were found in the tomb of Kha, "overseer of work" at Deir el - Medina before the reign of Akhenaten, suggests the type of furniture that adorned the homes of commoners. He holds that one can expect the furniture to be grander in the homes of the elite in Akhetaten.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

An appraisal of the scholarly debate as to how and why Hatshepsut succeeded to reign as pharaoh in the light of her non-compliance to secular conventional expectations, compels me to adhere to a cultural anthropological approach in my endeavour to provide a plausible reconstruction of relevant political, economic and social aspects in an attempt to answer the aforesaid questions.

A well balanced interaction of: (i) the ancient Egyptian world view; (ii) a royal ideology that was inextricably linked to a psychological theory. The latter enshrined an idealized perception of the political religious and social status quo and ran parallel with a fear of being marginalized from privileged positions. The aforesaid was perpetuated by the employment of oracles and myth, attested in the use of propagandistic typographical devices at Deir el Bahri; (iii) a strength of character that enabled her to address the needs of Egypt and simulate a sense of configuration in the conventions of the land to accommodate a female pharaoh as co-regent of Thutmose III. The aforesaid enabled her to be crowned and legitimized as pharaoh which was epitomized in the receiving of her **nekhbet** - five-fold titles; (iv) confidence in her abilities and a shrewd, manipulative mind are purported as reasons as to how and why Hatshepsut attained power.

In addition to the aforesaid, the relevancy of the "heiress" theory should not be negated. In the light of Hatshepsut being the daughter of Thutmose I and the principal wife of Thutmose II in correlation with the fact that seven kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty married their sisters, it seems probable that transference of kingship was ideally conform through the "heiress" who played a "symbolically matriarchal role". In the light of a seeming unavailability of eligible royal males in the consanguineal clan, Hatshepsut elevated the aforesaid into real power as a "defence mechanism" to ensure dynastic succession and property continuity. Thutmose II's death and its aftermath in the circles of the court served as

contributing factors that enabled Hatshepsut to ascend the throne.

Fear with regard to the fragmentation of central authority that hampered a continuity in kingship — a concept that was closely associated with the mortality of kings especially in the light of a bereft Hatshepsut firstly of her father, Thutmose I and secondly of her husband, Thutmose II, could have caused the officialdom to find a young and new pharaoh who was inexperienced in enacting a continuity with the ancestral ways of doing things, psychologically and administratively disturbing. In addition to the aforesaid, Hatshepsut's dominant position might be ascribed to a decline in her family that enabled the state i.e. the administrative government and Amen priesthood to achieve increased power to regulate the affairs of the state as they see fit, i.e. legitimizing Hatshepsut's claim to rule. In the absence of a king and keeping in mind that Hatshepsut was effectively the paramount head of administration that steered the economy of the land, the social elite might have feared possible "rationalization" of their hereditary and financial position in an administration under the control of Thutmose III.

Hatshepsut's role in society was acquired through a display of innovative leadership skills that was ingrained in her own royal personage and lineage and a "working" of the administrative system. In this manner her position as pharaoh was ensured which she could support with the immense wealth of the Eighteenth Dynasty and put to use to placate the officialdom who supported her claim as pharaoh, as **she** controlled the Treasury.

Taking in account that scant information exists with regard to how and why Nefertiti attained pharaonic prominence, the interaction of a cultural and an archival approach yielded plausible answers to the questions posited. Nefertiti symbolically and physically embodied and enacted a kingly role. The aforesaid is attested in intriguing clues such as Nefertiti's name changes during Akhenaten's lifetime which contrast with conventions in Hatshepsut's lifetime, as

the latter only changed her name after the death of her husband, Thutmose II. Nefertiti's name change is exemplified in the broken stone stela found by Petrie that is inscribed with the name "Beloved" — a name usually attributed to Nefertiti — and is in kingly fashion preceded by the name Ankhkeprure. The 'itn in the long form of Nefertiti's name i.e. **nfr-nfrw-'itn nfrt - 'i'it'i** / "Nefernefruaton" is reversed on a scarab found at Ulu Burun (1986), resulting in the seated queen facing the god, and attests to Nefertiti's religious and political importance and points to possible Egyptian - Aegean relations.

Derived from symbolic interpretations induced from iconography and architecture, one is able to determine Nefertiti's role as Queen Regnant from the kingly regalia she wore. Deduced from the latter statement it would appear that Nefertiti's elevated position should be seen as a direct affirmation of Akhenaten's ploy to assign regality to her in a period that initially was peaceful at a time when Egypt enjoyed unsurpassed wealth which enabled Akhenaten to pay officials directly from the treasury of the Disk. Apart from pictorial evidence, architectural evidence enables one to infer that a co-regency, though unrecorded, existed between Nefertiti and Akhenaten. This perception is derived from scenes conveying an equality of the royal pair in a depiction of Nefertiti wearing the "true" blue pharaoh crown or a depiction of Nefertiti standing to the right of Akhenaten in sculpture groups instead of the customary left, and conveys Nefertiti's disregard of protocol or custom. The Egyptian society would have tolerated Nefertiti's exalted position, for in Nefertiti's begetting of six children, she epitomized the successful, fertile woman and gained the approval of both society and her husband.

The pharaonic status of Hatshepsut and Nefertiti is best displayed in the religious domain where the religious cycle was allowed to take its full course. Both queens performed the priestly function of playing the sistrum to keep evil at bay, impersonating the goddess Hathor who is perceived as the consort of Khnum who is again identified with the Heliopolitan sun-god. When Hatshepsut

became pharaoh, the political ascendancy of the Heliopolitan sun-god allowed a co - existence of local gods which is in stark contrast with the religious scene during Nefertiti's and Akhenaten's reign. During the latter reign, which was characterized by royal absolutism, Egyptians were compelled to worship a religious triad, namely the Aton, Nefertiti and Akhenaten. However, it is Nefertiti's performance of the sacerdotal act of pouring libation — an act usually performed by kings, that truly points to her pharaonic status.

No clear indication can be derived from the sources as to why Nefertiti enjoyed such a prominent position. It has been suggested that the aforesaid should be correlated to Akhenaten's physical and mental abnormalities. There is no real evidence to support such a view. Neither do the sources yield information that affirms the idea that Nefertiti or Queen Tiy are to be perceived as the impetus to Akhenaten's religious revolution. As more archaeological data and written evidence accumulate and information can be pieced together in a more complete manner, a more absolute picture might emerge to prove whether Nefertiti should be perceived as sole ruler, for as yet, no real evidence can support such an assumption.

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